Everybody's Magazine

September 1917

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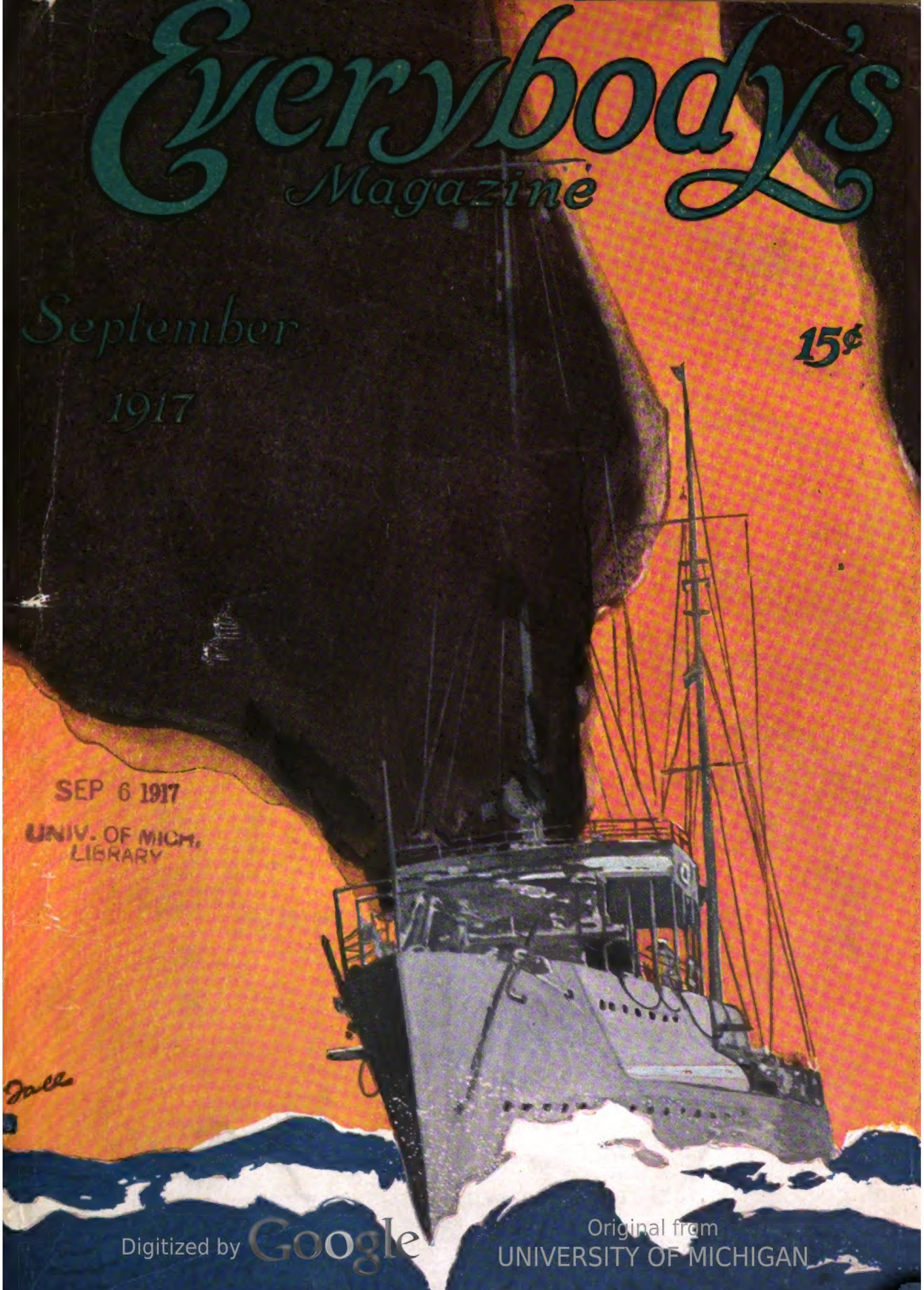

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Everybody's Magazine
NUMBER THREE SEPTEMBER 1917 VOLUME XXXVII

THE AWESOME SOUND OF MARCHING FEET.

THE LAST STEP TO THE TRENCHES

By Jeffery Farnol

AUTHOR OF "THE BROAD HIGHWAY," "THE DEFINITE OBJECT," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY L. A. SHAFER

Here is a striking picture of one of those great British training camps somewhere "out there" where "Tommies" and "Sammies" alike get their final discipline. This is the last step in the training that leads to the trenches. Perhaps already in this very camp some of our own boys are going through such grilling tests as Mr. Farnol voluntarily undertook. Step by step he went through them all—ran through poison gas; wept in the stinging vapor of the "lachrymatory"; choked in the smoke from liquid-fire bombs. This brilliant English novelist is well known to American readers—they need not be told that Mr. Farnol recounts his experiences with force and vividness.—The Editors.

THE great training-camp lay, a rain-lashed wilderness of windy levels and bleak, sandy hills, range upon range, far as the eye could see, with never a living thing to break the monotony. But presently, as our car lurched and splashed upon its way, there rose a sound that grew and grew, the awesome sound of countless marching feet.

On they came, these marching men, until we could see them by the hundred, by the thousand, their serried ranks stretching away and away until they were lost in distance. Scots were here, Lowland and

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Highland; English and Irish were here, with bronzed New Zealanders, adventurous Canadians, and hardy Australians; men, these, who had come joyfully across half the world to fight, and, if need be, die for those ideals which have made the Empire assuredly the greatest and mightiest this world has ever known.

And as I listened to the rhythmic tramp of these countless feet it seemed like the voice of this vast Empire proclaiming to the world that Wrong and Injustice must cease among the nations; that man, after all, despite all the "Frightfulness" that warped intelligence may conceive, is yet faithful to the highest in him, faithful to that deathless, purposeful determination that Right shall endure, the abiding belief of which has brought him up through the dark ages, through blood and misery and shame, on his progress ever upward.

So, while these men of the Empire tramped past through blinding rain and wind, our car pulled up before a row of

"SOME ARE BORN BOMBERS."

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low-lying wooden buildings whence presently issued a tall man in rain-sodden trench cap and burberry who looked at me with a pair of very dark, bright eyes and gripped my hand in hearty clasp.

He was apologetic because of the rain, since, as he informed me, he had just ordered all men to their quarters, and thus I should see nothing doing in the training line; nevertheless he cheerfully offered to show me over the camp, despite mud and wind and rain, and to explain things as fully as he could; whereupon I as cheerfully accepted.

The wind whistled about us, the rain pelted us, but the major heeded it nothing—neither did I—while K—— loudly congratulated himself on having come in waders and waterproof hat as, through mud and mire, through puddles and clogging sand, we followed the major's long boots, crossing bare plateaus, climbing precipitous slopes, leaping trenches, slipping and stumbling. And ever the major talked; wherefore I heeded not wind or rain, for the major talked well.

He descanted on the new and horribly vicious methods of bayonet fighting—the quick thrust and lightning recover; struggling with me upon a sandy, rain-swept height, he showed me how, in wrestling for your opponent's rifle, the bayonet is the thing. He halted us before devilish contrivances of barbed wire, each different from the other, but each just as ugly. He made us peep through loop-holes each and every one different from the other, yet each and every one skilfully hidden from an enemy's observation. We stood beside trenches of every shape and kind while he pointed out their good and bad points. He brought us to a place where dummy figures had been set up, their rags a-flutter, forlorn objects in the rain.

"There," said he, "is where we teach 'em to throw live bombs. You can see where they've been exploding—dummies look a bit off-color, don't they?" And he pointed to the ragged scarecrows with his whip. "You know, I suppose," he continued, "that a Mill's bomb is quite safe as long as you hold it; but the moment it is loosed the lever flies off, which releases the firing-needle, and in a few seconds it explodes. It's surprising how men vary: some are born bombers, some soon learn, but some couldn't be bombers if they tried—not that they're cowards; it's just a case of mentality. I've seen men take hold of a bomb, pull out the pin, and then stand with the thing clutched in their fingers, absolutely unable to move! And there they'd stand till Lord knows when if the sergeant didn't take it from them.

"I remember a queer case once. We were saving the pins to rig up dummy bombs and the order was: 'Take the bomb in your right hand, remove the pin, put the pin in your pocket, and at the word of command throw the bomb.' Well, this particular fellow was so wrought up that he threw away the pin and put the bomb in his pocket!"

"Was he killed?" I asked.

"No. The sergeant just had time to dig the thing out of the man's pocket and throw it away. Bomb exploded in the air and knocked 'em both flat."

"Did the sergeant get the V. C. or M. C. or anything?" I inquired.

The major smiled and shook his head. "I have a good many sergeants here and they can't all have 'em! Now come and see my lecture theatres."

Presently, looming through the rain, I saw huge circular structures that I could make nothing of, until, entering the larger of the two, I stopped in surprise, for I looked down into a huge, circular amphitheatre with circular rows of seats descending tier below tier to a circular floor of sand, very firm and hard.

"All made out of empty oil-cans!" said the major, tapping the nearest can with his whip. "I have 'em filled with sand and stacked as you see! Good many thousand of 'em here. Find it good for sound too—shout and try! This place holds about five thousand men——"

"Whose wonderful idea was this?"

"Oh, just a little wheeze of my own. Now, how about the poison gas? Feel like going through it?"

I glanced at K——, K—— glanced at me. I nodded, so did K——.

"Certainly!" said I. Wherefore the major led us over sandy hills and along sandy valleys and so to a dingy and weatherworn hut, in whose dingy interior we found a bright-faced subaltern in dingy uniform, surrounded by many dingy boxes and a heterogeneous collection of things. The subaltern was busy with a penknife, while at his elbow stood a sergeant grasping a

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"ONE DAY WE WOKE UP AN' STARTED BEIN' FRIGHTFUL, LORD."

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screw-driver. Perceiving the major, the sergeant came to attention while the cheery sub rose, beaming.

"Can you give us some gas?" inquired the major, after we had been introduced and had shaken hands.

"Certainly, sir!" nodded the cheerful sub. "Delighted!"

"You might explain something about it, if you will," suggested the major. "Bombs and gas is your line, you know."

The sub beamed again and, giving certain directions to his sergeant, spake something on this wise:

"Well, 'Frightful Fritz'—I mean the Boches, y'know—started bein' frightful quite some time ago, y'know—playin' their little tricks with gas an' tear-shells an' liquid fire an' that, and we left 'em to it. Y'see, it wasn't cricket—wasn't playin' the game—what! But Fritz kept at it and was happy as a bird till one day we woke up an' started bein' frightful, too; only when we did begin, we were frightfuller than ever Fritz thought of bein'—yes, rather! Our gas is more deadly, our lachrymatory shells are more lachrymose, an' our liquid fire is quite top-hole—won't go out till it burns out—rather no! So Frightful Fritz is licked at his own dirty game. I've tried his, and I've tried ours, an' I know."

Here the sergeant murmured deferentially into the sub's ear, whereupon he beamed yet again and nodded. "Everything's quite ready!" he announced. "So if you're on?"

After a momentary hesitation I signified I was, whereupon our sub grew immensely busy testing sundry ugly gray flannel gas helmets fitted with staring eye-pieces of talc and with a hideous snout in front.

Having duly fitted on these clumsy things and buttoned them well under our coat collars, having shown us how we must breathe out through the mouthpiece, which acts as a kind of exhaust, our sub donned his own headpiece, through which his cheery voice reached me in muffled tones:

"You'll feel a kind of ticklin' feelin' in the throat at first, but that's all O. K.—only the chemical the flannel's saturated with. Now follow me, please, an' would you mind runnin'?—the rain's apt to weaken the solution. This way!"

Dutifully we hastened after him, plowing through the wet sand until we came to a heavily timbered doorway that seemingly opened into the hillside, and beyond this yawning doorway I saw a thick, greenish-yellow mist, a fog exactly the color of strong absinthe; and then we were in it. K—'s tall figure grew blurred, indistinct, faded utterly away, and I was alone amid that awful, swirling vapor that held death in such agonizing form.

I will confess I was not happy; my throat was tickling provokingly, I began to cough, and my windpipe felt too small. I hastened forward, but, even as I went, the light grew dimmer and the swirling fog more dense. I groped blindly, began to run, stumbled, and in that moment my hand came in contact with an unseen rope. On I went into gloom, into blackness, until I was presently aware of my companions in front and mightily glad of it.

In a while, still following this invisible rope, we turned a corner, the fog grew less opaque, thinned away to a green mist, and we were out in the daylight again, and thankful was I to whip off my stifling helmet and feel the clean wind in my hair and the beat of the rain upon my face.

"Notice the ticklin' feelin'?" inquired our sub as he took our helmets and put them carefully by. "Bit tryin' at first, but you soon get used to it—yes, rather. Some of the men funk tryin' at first—and some hold their breath until they fairly well burst, an' some won't go in at all, so we carry 'em in. That gas you've tried is about twenty times stronger than we get it in the open, but these helmets are a rippin' dodge—till the chemical evaporates; then of course they're no earthly. This is the latest device—quite a top-hole scheme!"

And he showed us a box-like contrivance which, when in use, is slung around the neck.

"Are you often in the gas?" I inquired.

"Every day, yes, rather!"

"For how long?"

"Well, I stayed in once for five hours on end——"

"Five hours!" I exclaimed aghast.

"Y'see, I was experimentin'."

"And didn't you feel any bad effects?"

"Yes, rather! I was simply dyin' for a smoke. Like to try a lachrymatory?" he inquired, reaching up to a certain dingy box.

"Yes," said I, glancing at K——. "Oh, yes, if——"

"Only smart for the time bein'," our sub assured me. "Make you weep a bit!" Here from the dingy box he fished a particularly vicious-looking bomb and fell to

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poking it with the screw-driver. I immediately stepped back. So did K——. The major pulled his mustache and flicked a chunk of mud from his boot with his whip.

"Er—I suppose that thing's all right?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes, quite all right, sir, quite all right," nodded the sub, using the screw-driver as a hammer. "Only wants a little fixin'."

As I watched that deadly thing, for the second time I felt distinctly unhappy; however, the refractory pin, or whatever it was, being fixed to his satisfaction, our sub led the way out of the dingy hut and, going some few paces ahead, paused.

"I'm goin' to give you a liquid-fire bomb, first!" said he. "Watch!"

He drew back his hand and hurled the bomb. Almost immediately there was a shattering report and the air was full of thick

DEVILISH CONTRIVANCES OF BARBED WIRE

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gray smoke and yellow flame, smoke that rolled heavily along the ground toward us, flame that burned ever, fiery yellow tongues that leaped from the sand here and there, that writhed in the wind-gusts, but never diminished.

"Stoop down!" cried the sub, suiting the action to the word. "Stoop down and get a mouthful of that smoke—makes you jolly sick and unconscious in no time if you get enough of it. Top-hole bomb, that—what!"

Then he brought us where those yellow flames leaped and hissed; some of these he covered with wet sand and lo! they had ceased to be; but the moment the sand was kicked away up they leaped again fiercer than ever.

"We use 'em for bombing Boche dug-outs now!" said he. And, remembering the dug-outs I had seen, I could picture the awful fate of those within, the choking fumes, the fire-scorched bodies! Truly the exponents of Frightfulness have felt the recoil of their own vile methods.

"This is a lachrymatory!" said the sub, whisking another bomb from his pocket. "When it pops, run forward and get in the smoke. It'll sting a bit, but don't rub the tears away—let 'em flow. Don't touch your eyes, it'll only inflame 'em—just weep! Ready—one, two, three!"

A second explosion louder than the first, a puff of blue smoke into which I presently ran and then uttered a cry. So sharp, so excruciating was the pain that instinctively I raised hand to eyes, but checked myself and with tears gushing over my cheeks, blind and agonized, I stumbled away from that hellish vapor. Very soon the pain diminished, was gone and, looking up through streaming tears, I beheld the sub nodding and beaming approval.

"Useful things, eh?" he remarked. "A man can't shed tears and shoot straight, an' he can't weep and fight well both at the same time—what? Fritz can be very frightful, but we can be more when we want—yes, rather. The Boches have learned that there's no monoply in Frightfulness."

In due season we shook hands with our cheery sub and left him beaming after us from the threshold of the dingy hut.

Britain has been called slow, old-fashioned, and behind the times, but to-day she is awake, and at work to such mighty purpose that her once small army is now numbered by the million—an army second to none in equipment or hardy and dauntless manhood.

From her Home Counties, from the Empire beyond seas her millions have arisen, brothers in arms henceforth, bonded together by a spirit of noble self-sacrifice—men grimly determined to suffer wounds and hardship and death itself, that for those who come after them the world may be a better place and humanity may never again be called upon to endure all the agony and heartbreak of this generation.

THE TOILERS

BY HAROLD SPEAKMAN

STRONG, with the strength of earth beneath their tread,
Slow as the marching stars they gaze upon—
Squadrons of living Men and living Dead—
The legions of Democracy press on.

As one they come. "And who in yonder van
Illumines all the path that men may see?"

. . . . . .

"I think he is a fellow working man—
A Carpenter, they say, from Galilee."

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A MATTER OF QUALITY

By Walter Ferris

ILLUSTRATED BY TONY SARG

WHEN Billy Graves crossed from the caddy house he caught a glimpse of gay color near the sand box. He frowned. Some dub, probably, who would fluke along ahead of him. No one else could be out at this time of day. At six-thirty of an August morning he had expected to have the links to himself for practising shots.

As he approached the tee the wearer of those gay colors was hurrying back with a topped drive that had rolled twenty feet into the rough. He noted that her color was high and her lips compressed until they showed a whitened line. Signs of anger evidently. In the innocence of his mind he wondered why such a pretty girl should be angry at a topped drive. All the pretty ones did it.

Without a glance in his direction she teed up again, even her motions as she molded the sand indicating suppressed fury. Then she addressed the ball.

"You'll never hit it in that state of mind, my dear," murmured Billy to himself. But upon the thought she swung, met the ball fairly, and drove it a good two hundred and twenty-five yards, across the gully and well on to the fairway, straight as a queen-bee's flight.

Billy Graves's astonishment was such that he unconsciously spoke aloud. "By Jove! That's the way I like to see a ball go. Wish I could do it."

A very attractive face, just now flushed with undeniable anger, turned to him, and the young voice was bitter. "Yes," she said, "and I'll top the next, and slice the third, and make a perfect approach, and get the hole in seven. And then I'll go three holes in par and take eight for the next. That's my game!"

"Well," said Billy amiably, "I'll have to forgive you, I suppose, because you don't know that your remark reflects on me too. I've done the first in eight a good many times. It's a common fate of novices."

The irate glance held him. "But I'm *not* a novice. I've played six years and had any amount of lessons. I ought to do the hole in bogey every time."

"Of course that does make it worse," said Billy comfortingly. "I'm only a beginner myself."

"You bet it does." The girl looked away moodily across the gully.

"Your form's all right. I could see that." Billy's tone was judicial. "The trouble must be somewhere else."

The suddenness with which she whirled on him made Billy give a step backward. Had she been a man his fists would have gone up defensively. "Where is it, then?" she demanded fiercely; then as suddenly she grew wistful. "I'd give—I'd give an awful lot to know."

Billy shrugged. "There are plenty of chaps to tell you, at two dollars per."

"Oh, the professionals! They can't tell me. I've tried a dozen lately. They say any form's good enough for a decent game—for the sort I've got. I want to play."

Billy was eying her speculatively. He wondered why all this heat. It didn't sound like enthusiasm for the game exactly; indeed, she seemed hostile to it. Evidently something was in the wind. "Perhaps," he murmured more to himself than to her, "'more needest thou the divine than the physician.'" Then, realizing the force of the remark, he added hastily, "But of course I don't know."

The fine dark brows drew together, and there was a relaxation of the threatening manner. "You mean," she asked presently, "that the trouble's psychological?"

"That's about it, I should think; and probably ethical and philosophical, and a lot of other things. It is with most of us."

A little buckskinned foot struck the ground imperiously. "What do you mean? Are you talking rot just to tease me?"

Billy studied the ground a moment and then looked up, and his eyes were curiously sober.

"No," he said quietly, "that's not rot.

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"I'M BARBARA ELLORY," SHE SAID. "COME ON, LET'S FINISH THE ROUND."

You see, I've been figuring it out for myself lately, and I've come to the conclusion that a game like this is mixed up with all sorts of matters of character and temperament, and ideas. It's a touchstone of one's whole psychology. Sounds a bit like rot because I can't say it in a minute, but I know what I mean."

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For the first time a smile brightened the girl's face, a winning smile, frank and elfish at the corners. "In that case I make a fine showing, don't I?"

COACH BILLY NOTED THE SIGNS, AND LED THE WAY TO A BENCH IN A GROVE NEAR BY.

Billy smiled too, and by that smile his irregular features were given a glow of honest friendliness. The expression was at once an admission of her guilt and a complete disavowal of criticism. It indicated that he understood and appreciated the joke without any mental reservations whatsoever. Polite disclaimers are unnecessary when one can smile that way.

The girl sobered again. "Do you think, then, if one hasn't the proper temperament it isn't any use trying?"

"Oh, no, not that. There are plenty of temperamental fellows playing golf and tennis well. It's a matter of temper, rather."

The girl flushed a little. "Are you suggesting that I oughtn't to lose my temper? Because if you are, I know it. That's elemental golf."

Again that disarming smile. "I don't mean just getting mad. We all do that. I mean temper in the sense of—of quality of our metal, you know. One has to be a Toledo blade to play any game well, and particularly golf."

She looked at him thoughtfully. "That's probably true, but it doesn't help me very much. What I want to know is *how* to get the proper temper. And I must know too. It happens to be awfully important in my case."

If she hadn't been so pretty, the unconscious egoism of her utterance and the imperiousness of her manner would have amused Billy, probably to the point of veiled impudence.

As it was, he played up that "awfully important." "Well," he said, "if it's so serious as you say, there's such a thing as discipline, you know—training, building up one's temper all around."

"How do you mean?"

"I don't know that I can explain exactly. It's like what our coaches used to do in college. They took a lot of raw chaps, put 'em in a white-hot crucible and added chromium and vanadium and what not, which means mostly cuss words and personal magnetism; and finally out came a finely tempered substance that would bend but wouldn't break. And most of the chaps who experienced that process learned a lot about self-control and obedience, and doing the hard thing, and living for something bigger than oneself—valuable things like that."

It was a long speech for Billy; and as he made it the girl was studying him. What she saw was a little incongruous with his words. His frame could never have been very heavy, and now, despite the erect carriage, it seemed frail as though some malign touch had blighted its youth, until one could

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not imagine that it had ever charged the line. The same disparity was evident in his words. They had a whimsical, boyish sound, but they carried unconsciously the weight of an immense sobriety, as of something painful that would arm itself with brave words.

Before that scrutiny all signs of her haughtiness fled. She spoke with hesitation, even a little humbly. "It must be a great thing to have learned all that some time in the past. I think I see a little what you mean."

Billy's disclaimer came hastily. "Don't think *I* learned 'em. If you saw my game of golf you'd think I had the temper of a milk-fed Philadelphia capon."

"Well," she said slowly, "I think I should *like* to see your game. Also, I should like to hear more about your theory. It sounds like my proper medicine. Would you—mind very much playing around with me? I've had a notion all along that my trouble was too deep-seated for the professional. Will you?"

Billy would. If there is anything more attractive than such sweet humility, particularly when it has made a sudden Protean change from a really strapping indignation, Billy didn't know what it might be. He most certainly would.

The tee at the twelfth hole was built into a wooded hillside; and just above it at the brow of a cliff there was a view overlooking a small lake, and there were benches about. Here, an hour and a half later, the two were seated. The girl's face was flushed and angry, though her eyes were frank. Billy's face was inscrutable.

"There!" she was saying; "you've seen what a mess I am. Five holes in par, two in bogey, two in eight, and one in ten. Just a consummate, idiotic mess!"

"Of course you are, rather," said Billy cheerfully, "given your advantages."

"You bet I am." The girl dug viciously at the ground with her mashie, then presently looked up. "Well, have you seen enough to diagnose my case? If you have, please shrive me. I'm feeling very chastened."

Billy's posture registered discomfort. Circumstances had thrust upon him the rôle of mentor, to which he was not accustomed. And yet the girl was most appealing in her desperation. There must be some reason out of common for her mental tension, and just at this period of his career Billy had a fellow feeling for any sort of desperation.

"Well," he said, "if it's so necessary for you to improve your game, why don't you go into strict training?"

"Into training? Do you mean cutting out sweets and dancing? I've tried that and it doesn't do any good."

"Not necessarily." Billy's tone was cheerfully impersonal, because he felt like making it gentle. "Those are only the superficial aspects of it. I mean go into training in the sense of regularizing all your habits—a mental and moral discipline that will take care of the details whatever they may be."

The attractive face showed a pucker. "I particularly don't like that word discipline. I never have."

"No," said Billy, "you wouldn't. But it's the only way out, I fancy."

"But could you tell me what you mean exactly."

Billy shrugged. "Of course I can't specify, because I don't live in the same house with you. I mean in general doing the hard thing, the thing you don't want to do; playing out of bunkers all day; being rigorous with yourself all around. That's what tempers one's steel."

"I don't like playing out of bunkers. I get mad."

"Yes, I saw that. It spoiled your score this morning. But golf isn't played on the fairway. The real game is played in the bunkers, and in the rough, and behind logs. That's what I like about it. It's not very different from football, except that your mind gets knocked black and blue instead of your legs."

The girl was looking down at the pond where two swans were at their stately play, but her mind was on the homely wisdom of this rather strange young man beside her, whose tone was light enough but whose words carried an undertone of seriousness that sounded like fatality.

But a moment later some delicate sense told her that the atmosphere had changed. She looked up quickly, and surprised Mr. Graves in the act of smiling broadly, as though he had become aware of something delicious to the comic palate.

She stiffened. "It pleases you," she said, "to be amused at me. If I were not feeling very docile just now I should resent that."

"Not a bit of it," answered Billy, smiling

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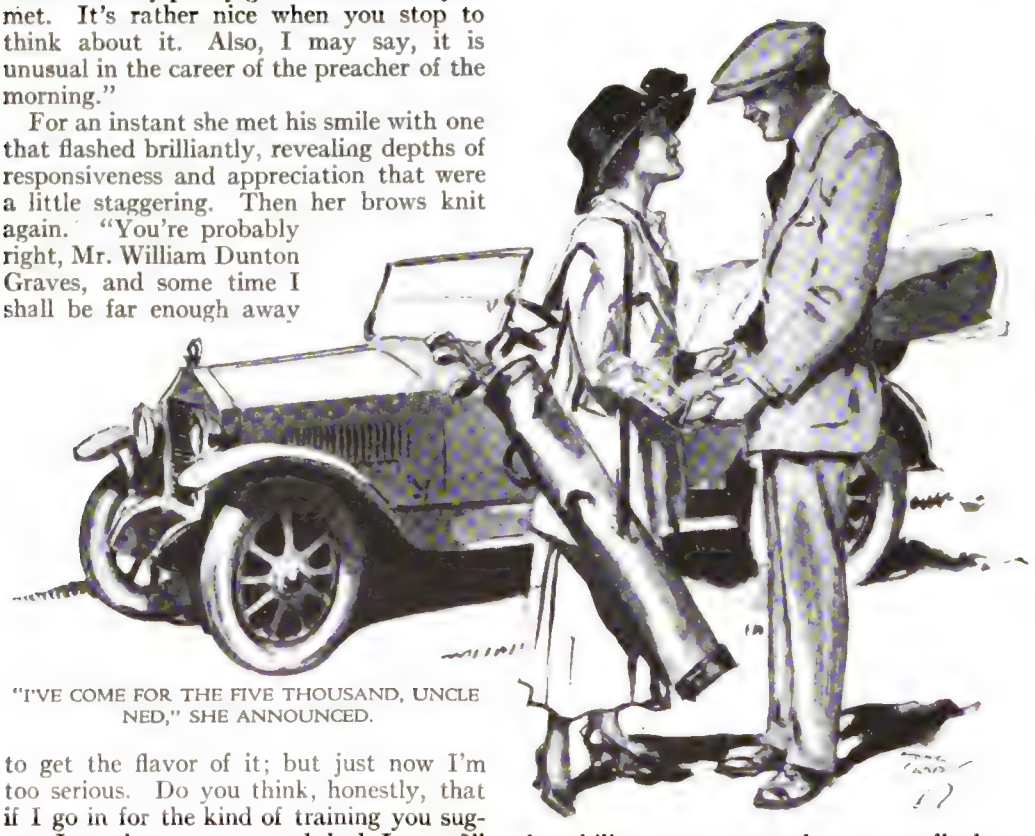
still. "I just caught a vision of William Dunton Graves, Esq., sitting on a bench under the trees, preaching high moral sentiment to a very pretty girl whom he has just met. It's rather nice when you stop to think about it. Also, I may say, it is unusual in the career of the preacher of the morning."

For an instant she met his smile with one that flashed brilliantly, revealing depths of responsiveness and appreciation that were a little staggering. Then her brows knit again. "You're probably right, Mr. William Dunton Graves, and some time I shall be far enough away to get the flavor of it; but just now I'm too serious. Do you think, honestly, that if I go in for the kind of training you suggest I can improve—a good deal, I mean?"



"I'VE COME FOR THE FIVE THOUSAND, UNCLE NED," SHE ANNOUNCED.

"I'd gamble on it. You have a fine healthy temper, which means pluck in the raw; and you've got the shots. Get that temper to working for you instead of against you, and you'll do wonders."

The girl sighed. "Your diagnosis is astonishingly accurate: I've sense enough to recognize that; and enough to know that I'm in luck to find the divine professional, or professional divine"—she gave him a fleeting glance of mischief—"who can convict me of sin. There aren't many who could do it."

"Don't, for Heaven's sake, take me for a parson. I wasn't trying to convict you of sin. I was only telling you how I had worked it out for myself."

"Well, you did convict me, just the same. You see I don't know much about doing the hard things. I'm sort of a spoiled child in spite of my twenty-two years. There's never been anything I really had to do, nor anything I wanted very much to do until now. And now I find that I haven't got the ability, or nerve—what you call the moral discipline. I've felt that all along; but I needed some one to tell me quite bluntly, as you have done."

"Well," said Billy with honest intonation, "it's hard luck to have lived like that. The only way to get real training is to have the sword of Damocles hanging over your head. On the squad in college if we fumbled we were jerked out of the varsity and put on the scrubs, quick. And if you had a headache, or your dinner wasn't feeling quite comfortable and you didn't relish going into the line, you went just the same. Every one ought to have a dose of that sort of thing some time."

The girl rose to her feet with a decisive movement, and stood above him, charmingly demure. "Mr. William Graves," she said, "I've imposed on you scandalously this morning, but you have been so kind that I am tempted to impose further."

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"Go to it," smiled Billy; "only I'd give it another name."

"How long are you staying here?"

A shade passed over the man's face. "I don't know. Two or three weeks, perhaps. I hope longer."

"Will you—would you mind very much being my sword of Damocles and football coach for two weeks, to see if you can make anything out of me? You can name your own salary."

"My modest honorarium," said Billy cheerfully, "will be a minimum of eighteen holes a day in your company. And in addition a promise that if you make me scold you, you won't dislike me too much."

A slim brown hand was extended, and the bargain was closed. "I'm Barbara Ellory," she said. "Come on, let's finish the round."

TWO weeks had passed, and at the dewy hour of seven A. M. Barbara Ellory was surveying her ball that had lodged deep in the long grass on the ninth hole. She had gone out well that morning and needed only a five to give her a very creditable score of forty-five. This was a particularly bad lie, and she felt the beginnings of a rising indignation. Something like this always turned up to ruin her score.

Her mashie caught in a bit of tenacious vine, and the ball went from one nest into another quite as deep and comfortable. Whereupon Barbara said "Damn!" The next swing was a vicious one; and the erratic ball, caught fairly, took to itself the wings of the morning and flew disconcertingly far and wide, landing under the lip of a bunker with a high sodded bank.

There was only one chance in a hundred of negotiating the bank, and Barbara ought to have played out to the side and accepted the lost distance; but by this time the beginnings of indignation had become torrential. She would get over that bank, or through it, if the penalty were a week in jail. The sand flew, once, twice, three times, before the ball finally dribbled over. When it went down for a ten she was almost in tears.

Coach Billy noted the signs, and led the way to a bench in a grove near by. Barbara followed, knowing that her catechism was about to begin. But when it did, the coach's voice was unusually gentle. "What's the matter this morning, Bobs?"

"I suppose it's that silly book I read late last night and got all excited about. I always blow up if I'm tired.

"Is that all?"

The confession came reluctantly. "No. My maid was late bringing up my breakfast, and I was awfully catty to her. I took it out on her for my staying up late, of course. I'm a pig."

"And you've had a touch of conscience ever since."

"Yes."

"Well, I guess that's enough to account for you. You're sent to the scrubs for the rest of the day, Bobs."

"All right, Billy."

There was silence for a little time, and then Billy spoke soberly: "You've improved a lot in these two weeks. You are usually under a hundred now, but you ought to be lower. Your game's good for a ninety. But there's still a tension somewhere—in your mind, I think—that puts pressure on you and makes you blow up."

"I've got to do better than a hundred."

"Why?" He turned abruptly to her. "Look here, Bobs, you've never told me about that necessity, whatever it is. I'm afraid I can't help you much further unless I know."

"There's five thousand dollars at stake, Billy."

Billy whistled, staring. "Five thousand dollars! That's some stake."

"Which means," said Barbara, "a runabout, and loads of frocks, and a whacking good time next winter."

Billy was looking incredulous. "Who in the world is putting all that up on a game of golf?"

"My uncle." She turned bright eyes to him. "He's your sort, Billy, fine-tempered steel. We love each other more than any one else in the world, but that doesn't make him approve of me. He thinks I'm spoiled until I haven't any determination left. Last winter he said that if I would take any one thing and do it well, he would pay me five thousand dollars. I chose golf, and he set the score at ninety-five on the Colonial links. That means about a ninety here. And the test comes in just five days. That's why I'm nervous, I guess."

"I see," said Billy. "The stake has become sort of a test of your self-esteem. No wonder you're keen about it."

"It's not that, Billy. I wish it were.

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I'm after the five thousand. Do you remember the family in 'The House of Mirth' that lived on the income of a million when the million ought to have been the income? Well, that's us. We're really poor. With that money in my pocket I could have a bully winter."

There was no response from the man. He sat looking soberly toward the irregular line of hills in the distance, where there were pockets that held little pools of mist not yet reached by the sun. Barbara glanced at him curiously, and with that glance she saw that the whimsical mask was gone from his face, leaving something stark and gray which struck at her heart.

She put one hand gently on his shoulder. "That's quite enough about me. Coach, what's the matter with you this morning?"

"Nothing."

"Don't lie. Something's gone wrong."

"Oh, well, it's all part of the game. I'm bunkered, that's all."

"Look here, Billy." Her voice was as gentle as her touch. "I've been wanting to ask you something."

"Don't do it, Bobs," he said quietly. "We're better as we are."

"Well, I'm going to, just the same. Why are you up here playing golf night and morning as though your life depended on it?"

He turned to her, the familiar smile again in his eyes. "You're a good guesser," he said. "Because it does, I'm afraid."

"Billy, what do you mean?" Her voice was shocked.

"It isn't a pleasant confession. I'm a fine example of my theory, that's all—four years out of college and a wreck. I've been no end of a fool, and the coach is about to put me on the side-lines for good, I think."

"You poor boy! What happened?"

"Oh, the usual thing. I was in a Boston office with a chance of going pretty far up. Worked too hard, and took a cocktail when I got fagged. The doctor says I was overdeveloped by athletics and ought to have kept in training. So, you see," he smiled at her boyishly, "I'm a fraud. I've been running a bluff on you all this time."

"Billy, I'm awfully sorry."

"So here we are. The doctor ordered a diet of eggs and golf for a month to see what it would do for me. It was necessary to take the game pretty seriously to keep my mind off—off things. I'm only on probation now. In a day or two I'll know my sentence. But I can guess pretty well what it will be."

"What?" She was looking at him with dark eyes.

"A year or two in the Rockies, or perhaps a life-term. I deserve the sentence, of course, but it isn't a pleasant prospect."

"Oh, Billy!" Barbara's lips were beginning to quiver.

He shook his shoulders and rose, looking down at her wistfully. "Well," he said, "I'm only playing out of the rough, after all. It hasn't been bad while you were here. Your coming was a miracle. But when you win that money we will be what the philosophers call two mutually exclusive facts. The bogey man is waiting for that time to get me."

Barbara rose, making no effort to hide the tears that had started to her eyes. "Oh, Billy," she said, "it makes my stake look so—p-pitifully small and selfish!"

Billy picked up his clubs. "Never mind, Bobs. I played four years for dollars and cents, and I won about as much as you'll have left of your five thousand when your gay winter's over. Come on, let's play."

AT ELEVEN o'clock in the morning, five days later, a motor deposited Miss Barbara Ellory at the country estate of her uncle, Mr. Edward Ballantine, aged fifty-two, tall, slender, a bachelor, and, inconspicuously, very wealthy. As he took the two brown hands, his fine eyes shone. He had waited for this coming.

Barbara carried her golf-bag like the sign of the Scottish clan summoning to battle. "I've come for the five thousand, Uncle Ned," she announced.

Below the gray mustache a white smile grew. "By Jove, you do look fit, Bobby! So you think you're going to take it away from me, do you?"

"I know it. I've been in training."

"Training! Where?"

"I chucked the Newport crowd and went into solitary confinement at Pine's End."

"Bully for you. I hoped you'd do something like that."

His niece rewarded him with the full radiance of her smile, wherein certain elves of mischief were wont to make a most potent magic. "Of course you did, you old dear. And it's done me no end of good. My golf began at six in the morning. I have an intimate acquaintance with the sunrise for the

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first time in my life. And I'm going to keep it up. What d'you think of that?"

"Well, by Jingo!" Her uncle indulged in a delighted stare. "Just for that, young lady, I'll lay you an additional five thousand against five kisses on that autumnal cheek, that you can't make the score. And I hope I lose."

"If you do," smiled Miss Barbara, "you win at compound interest. And here's one to grow on."

The match had been set for that afternoon, but the weather would not permit; and the two cronies spent the rest of the day before the library fire, while the bachelor heart of Mr. Edward Ballantine was warmed and fed.

At the breakfast-table next morning a letter, addressed in a strange hand, was presented to Miss Ellory. She opened and read, and as she did so the autumnal cheek turned wintry, and she rose and went quickly into the library, where an opened window gave on the rose-garden. Something tightened at her uncle's heart as he saw that going.

The letter read:

"DEAR BOBS:

"By the time you receive this, the big stake will be in your little hands, and you will be dreaming of riot and revel. I should hate to gloom the prospect, but you made me promise to keep you informed.

"The day before you left I was summoned to court to receive sentence. It's a life term, Bobs, or what pretty nearly amounts to that. I may be able to come back in two or three years, but not for hard work, and that is as bad as not coming at all.

"I am to be here for a few days longer, and then I shall be off for the Rockies somewhere. When I'm domesticated I'll write, and perhaps you will give me the great mercy of a letter once in a while.

"Don't think I'm crabbing, Bobs; I'm not. Precious few fellows sent off like this have been blessed as I have been. If anything could compensate for my sentence it would be the memory of these two weeks with you.

"God bless and keep you in all your ways.

"BILLY."

SHE OPENED AND READ, AND AS SHE DID SO THE AUTUMNAL CHEEK TURNED WINTRY.

When she had read the letter a second time Barbara folded it gently and sat looking into the rose-garden. She was recalling those last days.

After his confession on the links Billy had resolutely avoided any reference to his health or to his future. He had been so persistently cheerful that at first she had been annoyed, feeling that he was shutting her out undeservedly. And that last day, with his secret locked tight, he had been more than ever his kindly, amusing self.

But in those final hours their relationship had subtly changed. He had been no longer coach or father confessor. For one thing, there had been no need. She had played astonishingly well, without a flash of her old anger. It was as though her wager had become insignificant in the shadow of that greater stake, so that she was no longer driven by its necessity. She had been a little disappointed at Billy's want of enthusiasm over her improvement. He seemed to have forgotten their bargain, and was just content to be out with her in the sun and the wind. Perhaps, as she thought now, the contrast in the winnings for which they played had been present to his mind, too. He would be quite clear about that, but he wouldn't speak of it.

Only once had he given her a glimpse behind the light mask that he wore. The day had been splendid, with a northwest wind whipping across

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the links. She had turned to him, breathing deep. "It's a great game, isn't it, Billy?" she had said.

She remembered how he answered soberly, "A great game, Bobs, played like this. But I can imagine a man's growing to hate it if he had to play alone, day after day, just to keep alive." And then he had stalked away, angry at having spoken.

And that last day at the station he had talked laughingly about her car. "You're perfectly safe in counting the horse-power of your chickens, Bobs," he had said. "You're bound to win. Only, for Pete's sake, don't get smashed up against a telegraph-pole. The world can't afford any more invalids." And when the train was moving off he had pressed her hand with a brief "Good luck!" and then stood smiling up at her from the platform. My, how the man did play out of his bunkers!

With that memory she went back to the breakfast-table. Not that she wanted food; but the coach would have made her do it, with a match coming on.

Her uncle's paper lay unread, and his eyes were grave. "Trouble, Bobs?" he asked.

"It's all right, Uncle Ned," she said bravely. "I'll tell you about it some time."

And thereafter, until they were on the links, she moved and spoke quietly, as one moves and speaks in the presence of some spiritual manifestation that has touched one with awe.

It was not until they were well on in the first nine holes that her animation returned. Her shots were going magnificently. It seemed to her that she was playing in the midst of a great quietness, in which everything happened in an ordered sequence. She knew the feeling of certitude, as though all her acts were predestinate. When she found herself in difficulty she was glad, knowing that she was equal to her task. Sometimes she smiled with an unconscious tenderness when the ball obeyed her will, wishing that the coach might have seen it. He would be proud of her that day.

Her uncle was watching her in growing wonder, with eyes that were full of light. After she had made a particularly difficult shot on the eighth, speech broke from him. "Bobby," he cried, "you're perfectly wonderful! There's a mystery somewhere."

For an instant she gave him the full brilliance of her smile. "I am," she said, "and there is. Don't you wish you knew?"

And then before they were aware of it they were on the eighteenth tee, with the home green a scant four hundred yards away, and Barbara's score-card showing an eighty.

It was her honor, and she stood for a moment looking down the fairway, slender and straight, and very lovely in her unconscious grace. And as she looked the elves of mischief were working at the corners of her mouth. Then she turned and faced her uncle, and her tone, as she spoke, was mocking: "Are you getting ready to pay, old dear?"

Mr. Edward Ballantine grinned delightedly. "I haven't got it in my clothes, Bobby; but there's a perfectly healthy check-book in the library."

He considered for a moment. "Something's happened to you, young lady. And I don't mind telling you that this is the happiest day of my life. But," he added, his eyes twinkling, "perhaps we had better play it out, for the sake of discipline."

She gave him a fleeting glance of amusement, dropped her ball negligently, without teeing, swung, and drove it, not down the fairway, but directly to the right, where there lay a small lake. There was a splash, a brief staccato sound, and the ball disappeared in a little whirl of troubled water. Then she turned and met her uncle's gasp of astonishment. "There, my dear," she said, "your ten thousand is where it belongs, safely at the bottom of the lake. Now you're coming home with me, and we are going to have a long talk."

AT FIVE o'clock the following afternoon Billy Graves was sitting above the twelfth tee overlooking the pond, as he and Barbara Ellory had sat that first day when the confessional had begun. It was his last day of probation. He had forced himself to come out on the links that afternoon, but he couldn't play. The place was too full of her. Every nook and cranny, every blade of long grass, gave forth some flash of color, some sudden illumination of laughter, or petulance, or sweet humility. Perhaps when he got out West he would buck up and play. Of course he would, even if the stake seemed no longer worth while. She would think him a quitter if he didn't. But, by Jove, how it hurt, that prospect!

Then in the midst of his pain he heard a

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light step, and looked up to find a very radiant young woman in gay colors making a demure courtesy. "I'm a good pointer," she said; "I came straight to the thicket."

He stared dully. "You, Bobs?" he said.

"Very much I, Billy; and in the flesh, as you see." She stood smiling and swinging her driver lightly.

He continued to stare.

"Well," she challenged, "have you nothing to say?"

An uncertain smile came to his lips. "You won; I can see that."

She laughed roguishly. "You're not your astute self to-day, Billy. I didn't; I lost."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Bobs."

"That," she said, "is your first fib. You're not; you're glad."

And still he stared; and still she stood, demure and smiling.

"Billy," she said presently, "do you remember the afternoon I told you about the five thousand? You said, oh, so hopefully, that of course I was making it a kind of test of character, trying to prove that I was

HER UNCLE WATCHED HER IN GROWING WONDER. "BOBBY," HE CRIED, "YOU'RE PERFECTLY WONDERFUL!"

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worth a little something? You wanted it to be that, didn't you?"

"I suppose I did."

"Well, sir, do you know I believe that I felt that way about it underneath all the time, particularly after I found you. That's why I was so irritable. I couldn't respect myself a bit. Shall I prove it to you?"

"You don't need to. I knew it all the time."

"I didn't lose the wager, Billy; I threw it away. When the moment came I found I couldn't take it."

"What!"

"I had an easy eighty five or six, and on the last hole I drove my ball into the water deliberately."

A swift light came into the deep-set eyes that were watching her hungrily, and his voice was low. "I'm awfully glad, Bobs. It's so much more sporting."

She settled beside him with a little sigh. "It's worth twice the money to hear you say that. . . It's good to be back here, Billy."

"It's good to have you, Bobs."

Thereafter they sat quietly, looking intently at the trees, or down at the shadowy depth of the pond. He was thinking desperately of the things he must not say, and she of the things she was going to say. Her task, she knew, was not to be easy.

"Billy," she said, after a time, with a little hesitation in her voice, "do you remember that same afternoon when I asked you what was the trouble, and you said you were bunkered?" Billy nodded.

"Was it just your health that you were bothering about?"

"No, Bobs."

"What was it?"

"I can't tell you."

"Why?"

"The coach won't let me. It wouldn't be fair."

"But if I ask you?" softly.

He turned to her, his eyes desperate, and his voice hollow with the effort of repressed speech. "For God's sake, don't make it any harder for me, Bobs. You know I can't say it. You were awfully good to come down here, but it's damn near breaking my heart."

She moved close beside him and took one of his hands in hers. "All right, you dear, of course you won't. So I'll have to tell you. You were bunkered because I was going back to a gay winter and you wouldn't come, and you knew I needed you to look after me. And because you were laid off you thought it couldn't be done. Well, it can. I'm going with you."

Billy withdrew his hand roughly. "You're not!" he said.

"Oh, yes, I am. . . . Billy, I know that without me around to bully and play with, you'll never come back at all—you'll just die. And if I'm there to keep up your interest in the game, you'll be fit in a year. I've seen your doctor to-day, and he told me so."

"Bobs, you're not coming. I won't have you."

"How will you stop me?"

"Starve you out, for one thing. I have just one hundred dollars a month between me and the hayfield. It wouldn't keep you in golf-balls."

Barbara Ellory laughed, and the sound was very pleasant in that unhappy spot. "Like a good logician," she said, "I shall slay your arguments one at a time, as they rise. . . . Billy, I told you, didn't I, that my uncle loves me? Well, after I had driven my ball into the water we had a good talk. I told him more about my life in New York, about the crowd, and all the silly, rotten things we do, than even he had guessed. And then I told him about you and what you have done for me. And when I had finished there were tears in his eyes. He said that you were the man he had been praying for, and that he'd marry me to you un-sight, unseen. And he'll do it, too, over the heads of my family."

The man's voice was very low. "Don't, Bobs," he said.

"And he's going to fix it about the money, dear. He's got tons of it, you know."

Billy rose to his feet, and his voice was savage. "Well, he's missed his guess, that's all, if he thinks I'm going to live an invalid on your money. I can't think of anything that would kill me quicker."

Again that rippling laugh, but now it was full of tenderness. "Dear old Billy," she cried, "we knew you better than that, he and I. I'm not to have any money, not much, only a little for golf-balls and frocks. There's a big ranch out West that belongs to Uncle Ned, and some other interests. He's been looking for a responsible financial agent. You're it, Billy, and it's honest work. Now will you be good!"

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She stood before him, flushed with her triumph, her eyes dancing, very lovely to those other hungering eyes. He waited for a moment, letting that vision have its way in his soul. Then he spoke, not desperately now, but out of an immense sadness.

"Bobs," he said, "the worst crime I can think of would be for a half-man like me to marry you, you brave, beautiful creature. I can't do it. You know I can't. I love you too much for that."

The quick tears had come to those radiant eyes, and her hands were on his shoulders. "Billy dear," she said softly, "I knew you would say that, too. But there is another side you haven't considered. . . This is my chance as well as yours. If you won't take me, I'll have to go back to the New York crowd, and the little soul I've got will be smothered. It was being killed fast enough before, but now it would die very quickly. You're my only salvation, Billy. If you are only a half-man, you're bigger than all the others I know. There are two lives in your hands, my dear. . . . What would the coach say?"

Billy looked long into that earnest face, and then turned abruptly away to the edge of the cliff, and there stood. Behind him the girl waited, her color gone now, and the slender body tense with fear—waiting for the struggle to be over, for the decision which she knew would be final. It seemed to her that time had stopped, and that all eternity was centered in this moment while she watched his figure, straight and rigid, on the brow of the hill.

Finally he turned and came to her. "Bobs," he said hoarsely, "did—did the doctor say what you just told me?"

"Yes, honestly, Billy." There was naked truth in those frightened, honest eyes. "He said it was mostly nerves, and that with something to live for, you might be back in a year. I—I should be something to live for, shouldn't I, dear?"

She saw that a change had come into his face, that the stern lines were relaxing, and her words came quick and low. "We'll be married to-morrow from Uncle Ned's. It's not a gamble, dear; he's all the backing we'll need. . . . You'll come, Billy?"

Then suddenly his resistance was broken, and a great light shone in his face. "Bobs," he cried, "you great, splendid thing!"

MIDDLE-AGE

BY RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER

I USED to think it most undignified
Of what I called "old codgers" to appear
In checks, bright neckties, or to pal and cheer
With college boys; and, as for those who tried
To dance with débutantes, I could not hide
Smiles of amusement bordering on a sneer
That baldheads should not know their proper sphere;
Should gambol with so little sense of pride.

But since last evening—spring was in the air—
When I observed a mirrored figure pass,
A man of forty prancing to the band,
A portly chap with precious little hair;
Saw him and cursed the honest looking-glass;
Since then—*How much it costs to understand!*

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RASPUTIN—*The Real Story*

By Lincoln Steffens

Mr. Steffens has brought out of Russia the inside story of what really happened to that amazing figure of terror and power—Rasputin. This month Mr. Steffens tells of the rise of Rasputin and the fall of the Tsar—with some astonishing parallels from our own American life. In the October number Mr. Steffens will tell the true story of Rasputin's mysterious killing, as given to him by the assassins.—THE EDITOR.

THE assassins' own story of the killing of Rasputin, was told me first in confidence, "not for publication," and I had no thought of printing it. I meant to keep it, as they did in Petrograd, for the elect, my friends. But I found that their friends were many; scores of the Russian elect knew it and told it. I heard it several times; six times in all detail, and four times without any restriction, except one; the sole purpose of the suppression.

Everybody wished to protect the good name of the lady in the group.

I shall do that, and I'll do it better than they do it in Petrograd. There they name the prince who led in the doing of the deed; they have printed his picture on penny post-cards, and, since "everybody" knows the names of the actors who played the leading rôles in this historical drama and their relationship one to another, the name of the beautiful young noblewoman who is its heroine is well known, too, and freely spoken. It is spoken with respect; with gratitude, with patriotic appreciation of her purpose, courage, and nobility; and I could not err there. The facts present a heroine.

And the fiction story of the assassination—the story which was invented on the spot to protect the lady, and which was published at the time and is coming to be accepted as true—that story does not show a heroine, but only a lay figure. It does the true

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heroine a wrong; more, it does a wrong to the heroic part Russian womanhood has performed throughout the whole heroic history of the struggle for Russian liberty. Wherefore that false story does an injustice to all womankind.

When the secret history of Free Russia has been written and the service of Russian women to it is known to all the world, then, women may rank in all the world as they rank in New Russia to-day; and no man (and no woman) could say or wish more for women (or for men) than that.

But never mind. I shall respect the Russian respect for the Russian woman who drew on Rasputin and drove on his slayers; I shall protect her name by naming neither her, nor the prince, nor any other of the high-born Terrorists who, in terror themselves, felled, in Rasputin, the Terror of the Tsar, and so, with their courage, blazed the way for the calm courage of the Revolution, the fall of the Romanoff dynasty, and, let us hope, of tsars the world over.

ONE icy day in Petrograd last spring, some Americans made up a little party to go to Tsarskoe-Selo to see the late Tsar in his prison-garden. When they came back that night, they shouted joyously:

"Vegetables! We'll soon have vegetables! We saw the Russians working in their truck-gardens all along the road."

They were hungry: we all were, all the time. St. Petersburg was "the best place to eat in all the world." That was before the war and the Revolution. Russia still was fat with abundance, but the machinery of life—transportation, industry, commerce—had broken down completely.

Petrograd in the spring was short of every kind of food and drink, and we who were there felt the want of everything, and especially of vegetables. So the news from Tsarskoe-Selo was good news and no news.

But how about the Tsar?

They hadn't seen the Tsar.

They had seen his palace prison; the garden he worked in; the soldiers of his revolutionary guard. They had seen, too, the half-built, never-to-be-finished tomb which the Tsarina had ordered for Rasputin, and they had seen the obscene drawings the peasant-soldiers had scratched on its walls to illustrate the gossip about the relations of the Tsar and Tsarina with that strange "pilgrim" who came to them from Siberia with the prophecy that his fate and theirs were one.

"While I live, you will reign," he said. "When I am killed, the House of Romanoff will fall."

Before it happened, it was said that he said this: and before it happened, the Russians laughed at the prophecy, but, superstitious all, they all half-believed it; and

RASPUTIN MADE A GREAT PILGRIMAGE FROM SIBERIA TO JERUSALEM

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as for the Tsarina, she believed it wholly. That was Rasputin's hold on her; not what the gossip illustrated by the soldiers insinuated.

Not true, this gossip; probably not. Men and women who knew the Court and hated the Tsarina and all her works, said it wasn't. But, believed all over Russia, these tales had deposed the Tsar from the hearts, from the reverential souls of his people as well as from the throne. It broke the spell—that and the death of Rasputin. That gossip makes "the Little Father's return to power," like those pictures on the wall, almost unmentionable in Russia.

The party of Tsarskoe-Selo had seen not only the conditions of Russia, they had seen why the Tsar can not come back.

And they heard that he doesn't want to come back. They saw people who had seen the Tsar—afar off through the fence and the trees—breaking ice in his garden, and these marveling witnesses testified that the royal gardener made not an unhappy figure. On the contrary, they and everybody else that has seen him, those who stared from a distance and the few we met who had access to his presence, all agreed that Nicholas Romanoff seemed to be "happy at last."

He likes his garden. He hums at his work there. He meant what he said when he was arrested: that "now he would have time to 'tend to his flowers." He loves flowers; he did not care for power.

THE extraordinary story of Tsar Nicholas is, at bottom, only the very ordinary story of all those many, many men and women who happen into a position or duty which they hate, but which they think they can not give up. I knew a professional lobbyist who, having acquired conscientious scruples against bribery, was too conscientious to leave his clients to do their own bribing. We all know veteran captains of industry, political bosses, and other leaders who stick to their thrones, holding back their juniors and progress, dutifully, while their heart's desire is to retire to the country and work a bit of a garden.

We have no princes in American politics, no inheritors of political power. It is only in business now that the sons of great men succeed by right of birth to the places and possessions of their fathers; but the business world knows business princes who, with a taste for art or sport or flowers, wabble around unhappily but heroically in the thrones of their fathers.

Nicholas Romanoff inherited the throne of Russia, so he sat in it for the sake and in the service of "his people," though his passion was to tsar it over flowers. And now, as he hums over his pick and shovel, he shows no interest, they say; asks no questions to indicate that he knows or cares how it is going with Russia and the world outside. That it goes on at all is curious, but —that's all.

"A weak man," they call him now in Petrograd, and the stories they tell to prove it show that he is not only weak; as a ruler, he was soft. He was born soft; he was brought up soft; and, soft, he was brought down. His race, the Romanoffs, strong once, had gone down by bad breeding, by inbreeding, by the systematic selection of wives from among the "very best families of Europe," the families most weakened by possession of the most power, riches, and privileges; the "Royal Houses." For riches, privileges, and power are a wrong not only to the people who pay for and support them, but still more to the "beneficiaries" of these "good things." And the process of degeneration is swift and natural. We see it all around us here in the United States.

Once, when it seemed time to hear the railroad's side of a great railroad controversy, I called upon the chief attorney for one of the greatest railroad systems in the United States.

He approved heartily my idea that it would be fair and fine to let the railroads speak. But when he learned that my specific proposition was to have him arrange for me an interview with the grand old man who was the president of his road, he was shocked.

"What!" he said, "you interview Mr.——? Certainly not. That would not be fair. He is not your equal; you'd put it all over him."

I thought he was joshing me, and maybe he was, but he said he wasn't, and he went on to explain; and his explanation of the weakness of his president is an explanation of the softness of kings—all kings, whether of railroads or of kingdoms.

"Look," he said. "Mr.—— was a railroad man once, and he was a man. He came up from the bottom of the service, fast, because of his nerve, power, and ability to handle

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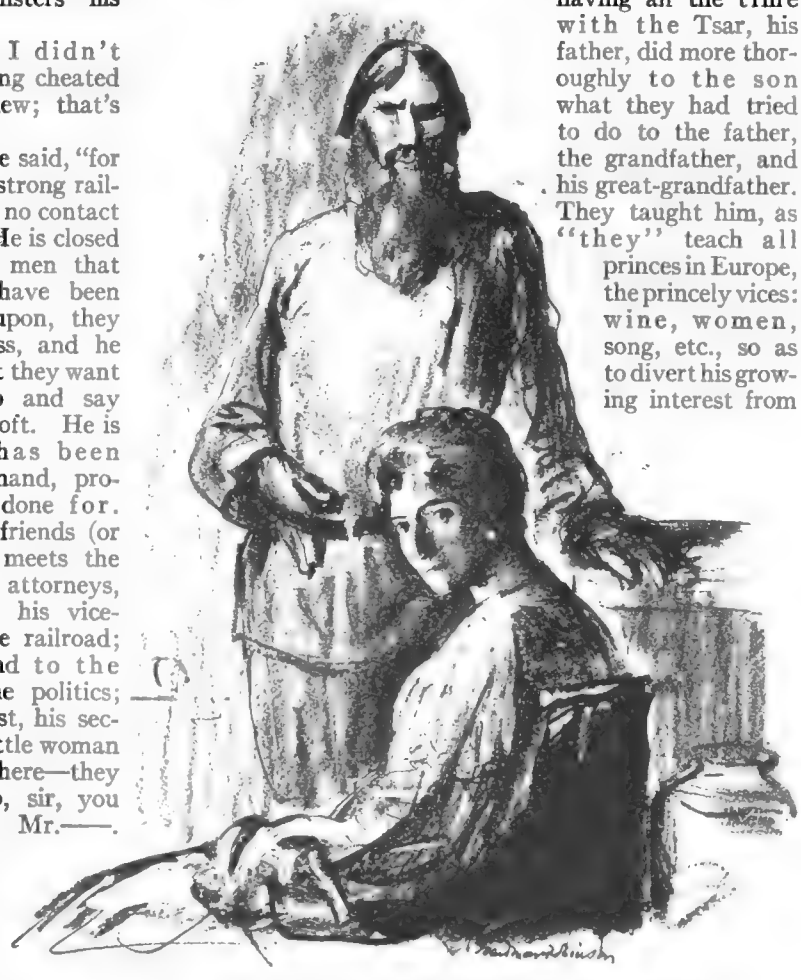
men. But when he got to the top, we, his friends, his fellow-directors, and our clique of bankers and lawyers—we wanted to share with him his power, his labor, and his responsibilities. So we made him 'go 'way back and sit down' in a back room, a grand, big, beautiful office, but it was 'way back. Of course we told him it was to save his time and strength for the big things, but we set him a private secretary to be with and watch and protect him; and—other secretaries. If somebody wanted to see him, the caller had to pass a guard at the front door, and a clerk in the front room, the secretary to his private secretary in the second room, and his private secretary in the third room. Flanking him were his attorneys, his staff, his heads of departments, his ministers—his court. See?"

"No," I said; I didn't "see." I was being cheated out of an interview; that's all I could see.

"Why, look," he said, "for years that great, strong railroad man has had no contact with the world. He is closed off from it. All men that get in to him have been studied, passed upon, they and their business, and he has been told what they want and what to do and say about it. He is soft. He is like a girl that has been brought up by hand, protected, guarded, done for. He sees only his friends (or ours); he never meets the enemy. We, his attorneys, do the fighting; his vice-presidents run the railroad; his bankers attend to the finance; I do the politics; and, as for the rest, his secretary and that little woman stenographer in there—they do the rest. No, sir, you can't interview Mr.——. You'd get him in bad, you, with your practise in dealing with men; but—" as it occurred to him I might be swelling up under his flattery, he closed his eyes down hard and tight—"but," he said, "you may interview me. I'm not afraid of you."

THE Tsar was a child once, a Tsarevitch. His parents and his parents' ministers realized that he was to come into their great power. It was preposterous. How could he, that baby there, wield such power? No. They must wield it for him; they must prepare him to let them wield it for him. So they surrounded his tender little years with nurses, governesses, servants, guards, to bring him up, protected, safe, soft; and the ministers of the Crown, and the grand dukes, the great landlords and all the interests, sensible of the trouble they were having all the time with the Tsar, his father, did more thoroughly to the son what they had tried to do to the father, the grandfather, and his great-grandfather. They taught him, as "they" teach all princes in Europe, the princely vices: wine, women, song, etc., so as to divert his growing interest from



THE TSARINA WAS THE CLEAN CENTER FROM WHICH RASPUTIN RADIATED HIS CONQUEST OF RUSSIA.

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ALL PETROGRAD—ALL THE UPPER CLASSES, WERE SPEAKING OF "IT."

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affairs of state to the undermining of his body, his mind, and his character.

Lenine, the veteran radical, who came back to Russia for the Revolution, took, you remember, for his residence in Petrograd, the private palace of the Tsar's mistress; the mistress of a prince who didn't care very much about women; who preferred flowers; but who was bound to do the conventional princely things!

The Autocrat of all the Russias was not an autocrat. No autocrat is. Autocracy is impossible, even in the United States. Peter the Great and the great Catherine of Russia came the nearest to exercising absolute power individually. But look back in the books to their days and you will see what the history of every absolute monarch shows; what the stories of the original great conquerors bring out best: that there are always what we call special interests; that these interests have power; that their power is rooted deep in custom, by possession and privilege, and that every ruler, every autocrat; every boss, has to gather back of, around, and under him and his throne, the support of these powerful interests.

To get them, he has to pay the price: a division of his power, privileges, and his graft. The autocrat must grant the powers that be the right to advise with him and to draw with him wealth from his kingdom and his subjects. Peter the Great did it; so did Catherine; so did all the Romanoffs down to the happy little Tsar in the garden at Tsarskoe-Selo. He didn't, and that's why he is in the garden.

Nicholas the Soft fell because he believed literally and actually the theory that he, the Tsar, was the Autocrat of all the Russias. He ceased to represent the interests. He did not take advice from the grand dukes, from the great landlords and the great *concessionnaires*. He consulted only with the Tsarina and Rasputin; he gave them all his power, and so there were no backers, there was no support for his throne. The special interests, the land-barons, the gentry, the banks, the business men, the church—they all had turned against or away from him, and when the Revolution rose like a storm and beat upon his throne, it washed out from under him like a structure of sand.

Boss Cox of Cincinnati, Ohio, U. S. A., made the same blunder and suffered a similar penalty once. He had been called an autocrat so much that he came to believe that he was. He forgot that he was boss because he represented the banks, the public service corporations, privileged business, vice, and persons. He told me himself that he was "it," he and he alone, and I found upon sounding the heads of those interests, which in all cities (and in all states and in all nations) are the sources of corruption and the supports of thrones, that Cox was right. The interests in Cincinnati were dissatisfied with him; they were "mad." "Cox has started a bank of his own," they said.

I told the reformers of Cincinnati that Cox was weak and could be beaten. They didn't believe it at first; they believed with Cox that the political boss was really the boss; and it was hard to persuade them to make a fight. But they were persuaded to try it; they organized a reform campaign and, to their amazement, Cox went down—as the Tsar has just gone down, and for the same reason: the real powers did not stand for him because he did not stand for them.

COX came back, and he came back in the only way the Tsar could come back: The "provisional government" of the political reformers of Cincinnati also did not fully represent the privileged interests of the city, and when, before the next election, Cox had promised to "be good," he received the financial and "moral" support which elected his ticket and restored him to (apparent) power. The hope for Russia lies in these differences: that the Tsar does not want to come back; that his people are so disgusted with him that he is not a popular figure for the reactionaries to use; and, best of all, that the Russian revolutionists, unlike our reformers, understand what political power really is.

"We have killed off enough tsars," they say, "to have learned that the Tsar makes no difference. The trouble is not with the man."

The Soldiers' and Workmen's Committee are not "taking office." They refused the crown when Miliukoff offered it to them. They proposed to keep the Provisional Government on the throne to do the political governing, while they, the embodiment of democratic sovereignty, backed by the army, navy, and all the force there is, are plotting and planning to communize the land and all natural resources, to publicly

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own and administer all the public services and chartered privileges, and so abolish the economic sources of plutocracy, which corrupts government, destroys democracy, and forms the foundation of thrones whether in empires, limited monarchies, or republics.

That's what they mean when they say in Russia that they are "going to have a republic; yes, but not like the United States. A democracy is what we are proposing to begin to found here; a democracy, not a plutocracy."

Russia, the Tsar's Russia, was a plutocracy. All countries are plutocracies. There are no monarchies, no aristocracies, no democracies. The Tsar was the richest man in Russia. He had all the wealth his ancestors had taken and not squandered, and he had, as Crown property, all the undeveloped lands, mines, forests, and about half the developed wealth of all the Russias. And he and his family had been the sources of titles, powers, positions, lands, mines—in brief, of properties and privileges, from which the aristocracies and the rich drew their nobility and their riches. But he was also "the Little Father" of the Russian peoples, all of them: the great Russians and the little Russians, the Poles, the Finns, the Lithuanians, the Cossacks, and all. And with the land and the mines, he gave also the labor of his people to work these things for the owners of them; his family, friends, and backers.

One of the first acts of the Russian Revolution was to declare that all the property of the Crown was to become the property of the people; not the state, but the Russian peoples.

Nicholas II., the gardener, did not start this system in Russia; he found it going. He accepted, as we have seen, as a duty, the burden of administering all these properties, and the army and navy, police, and the Government generally, which the proper defense of these things required. But he got out of the work of it all as much as he could; he gave it over to whomsoever he found ready to take it. He didn't see many people, only the few who were admitted to his presence, and they, the grand dukes and the nobility, were forever quarreling among themselves, wanting things that couldn't be divided. He had to decide between them. The flowers were blooming in the garden, and there was a row in the palace to referee. The Tsar hated it all, and indeed it was sordid; as sordid as the daily business of an American boss.

The Tsar let his wife do as much of it as she would. He was giving his power to her; he didn't know it; and it wasn't for love that he did it. It was for peace. He thought he was ridding himself of trouble, not power, and the Tsarina liked trouble, and power. She was strong. She was too strong for him. When he was arrested, his one request was that they would take him "to prison, not home." He was afraid to go home to the Tsarina.

The Tsarina reigned during the reign of Nicholas II., and at first she deferred to the high-placed persons who represented the actual powers in Russia; but it was not in wisdom that she did it. She didn't know, either, what the Soldiers and Workmen know, that that was necessary under the system. She did it by force of custom, as the Tsar had done it, and all the while her heart's desire was, like his, elsewhere. She loved religion as the Tsar loved flowers.

The Tsarina and the Tsar were ready for Rasputin when he came, ready and waiting to give him all.

There's no mystery about it; it isn't, as the foreigners say in Petrograd, "so Russian." Richard Croker tried to give his boss-ship to Lewis N. Nixon in the same misunderstanding way. He was through with it; he preferred to breed horses, and Lewis Nixon was a good man. The people of New York didn't revolt, it is true—they looked on helpless; but the interests did. When Nixon failed, and Croker appointed a committee of three to take his place, the interests picked Francis J. Murphy, one of the three, went to the seashore with him, and came back to New York with an understanding that Murphy was boss. And Murphy was boss, therefore, and nobody thereafter, not even Croker himself, could undo him.

RASPUTIN was a pilgrim. He was not a monk or a priest; he wasn't even a lay-priest. He came to make priests and he appointed bishops and archbishops, but he was never more himself than a pilgrim. And a pilgrim in modern Russia is just what he was in medieval days in the rest of Europe: a sinner who goes forth on a pilgrimage to do penance for his sins. Rasputin was a great pilgrim, and he did a great

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pilgrimage: from Tiumen, a village in distant Siberia, to Jerusalem, to Moscow, and to Petrograd; but, then, he was a great sinner, too.

When the Tsarina received him, and he received from her the powers of the Tsar, the Court and the interests put detectives on Rasputin's track to get his record, and they were able to show the Tsar proofs that Rasputin's early sins, the sins which started him out of his home town for Jerusalem, were horse-stealing and rape. The Tsar was impressed, but the Tsarina was not. She knew all about it; Rasputin had told it to her himself; and so she knew what it was so hard for the plutocracy about her to understand—that was Rasputin's religion:

"Sin." "Except ye repent"—he quoted, and he reasoned that since you can not repent unless you have sinned, you must sin. And he reminded men and women, and especially women, that "there was more rejoicing over the one sheep that had gone astray" than over the ninety-nine that stayed with the flock. "Therefore," he said, "stray. Stray, and let me find you and bring you back, so that there may be more rejoicing in heaven."

Devilish? That's what they say in Petrograd. Quoting, themselves, the line about "the devil quoting Scripture," intelligent Russians declared that Rasputin was a devil, and they said it with a shudder and a look of fear, which showed that they believed it very literally. His knowledge of the Bible and the church service; his perversion of doctrines and phrases all to his beastly uses; the power he developed over not only the Court, but women of high degree and culture; and the way he eluded or defied the vengeance of gallant husbands, brothers—yes, and sons—cast a spell of superstitious dread of the man.

Reckless dandies who set out to kill him came back innocent and appalled. They couldn't tell just what he did to them, but he prevented them from doing anything to him. They said he waved his hands over them,

RECKLESS DANDIES WHO SET OUT TO KILL HIM CAME BACK INNOCENT AND APPALLED.

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fixed them with his miraculous eyes, and they left their honor with him unavenged.

This superstitious horror of Rasputin is a dramatic fact in his story; without a realization of the fear of him that permeated Petrograd, one can not understand what happened. So we must know, but we needn't have this horror. Rasputin's knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Greek service was good and it was acute, but the Russian peasants are devout, and almost every village has its "peasant theologian" who is to the church what a "sea-lawyer" is to the crew of a ship: the people's own authority on the wording of the law. His misreadings of his texts seem purposeful, and they are ridiculous, but it is not the devil alone that misapplies the Scriptures.

RASPUTIN'S "lost sheep" and his doctrine of sinning in order to repent, are no more preposterous than the texts upon which certain sects of the Christian religion have been started; and we all have heard men reason that since Jesus said the poor would probably always be with us, it is wrong to try to abolish poverty; and that His "Render to Cæsar" means that we must not depose kaisers, tsars and—trusts. The depth and the breadth and the heights of the Christian doctrine of love form a conception so big that the minds and hearts of men can not grasp it wholly, so each one or each group of us picks out our little bit of it, a word or a phrase, which falls well within the limits of our comprehension and of our disposition, and upon that we build a religion or a church.

That's all Rasputin did, and if we set him aside as a devil or even as a deliberate, intelligent rascal, we'll miss the meaning of him to Russia and his use to us in America. I think Rasputin was sincere, like all of us, a large part of the time. He had moments of cynicism, but in the main he meant emotionally what he said. How else can you account for his power?

He did steal and he did rape as a young man, but also he did pray and he did repent. He was both religious and sensual, both selfish and loving. He was run out of Tiumen, but there is no doubt at all that he did make the long, weary pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He sinned on the way, as his diary shows, but it shows, too, that he sorrowed and suffered and prayed. And, in his struggle with himself, in his poor mind's fight to bring into some sort of union his strong lusts and his strong religious emotion, he hit upon his final interpretation of the doctrine of love. He made it mean his kind of love, and taught it so. "Let us love one another," he said. And then, discovering the ecstasy of it, he taught his followers to "Come, let us sin together, so that we may pray together and forgive one another." He used innocent language in the Greek service to this end.

Now his followers were mostly women, and he, the pilgrim, with a pious but sensual aspect, in his peasant, pilgrim garb, took refuge in the nunneries in the towns he passed through. He began to make a quiet sensation; his fame went ahead of him; he was welcomed with a thrill of awe and fascinating fear. And he was not always the same. He was never the same. If there was any genius in the man, it was his gift of divining the thoughts, the expectations toward him of others, and his intuitive ability to meet these expectations. He really was all things to all men and all women: pious to the pious, pure to the pure, an animal to the weak who secretly yearned for strength. And that's the explanation of his relations with the Tsarina.

The most mysterious question about Rasputin's rise is, "How did he get into the Court at Petrograd?" Nothing could be simpler. In a nunnery at Moscow he met the Tsarina's sister. Like the Empress, the sister was a devotee of the church, of charity and humane service. Rasputin met her, and he met her every thought and longing. He expressed her, satisfied her, and so she recommended him to her sister in the Court. He was summoned to Petrograd, and, happening to arrive at a time when the little Tsarevitch was ill, he stroked and wished him well. And the child happened to get well.

The Tsarina is a good mother, and a very superstitious, almost a fanatically religious woman. She called this a miracle, and the performer of it an angel of goodness. Rasputin could come up to that expectation, too. He played that part. Whenever after that the Tsarevitch was ill, Rasputin waited a while and then, when the sickness had had time to run its course, he would lay on his hands. The story that he had a woman who made the child ill is pretty generally believed in Petrograd, and it may be true, but medical men there who knew

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something of the circumstances said it wasn't necessary to accept this explanation. The more probable one I have suggested is sufficient. But if he did use drugs on the child and even, as it is also said, on the Tsar himself, we may be sure, from our knowledge of ourselves, that he did it for a good purpose. Threatened and plotted against, he had to defend himself and protect the policies he was using the Tsar and his power to work out.

It is a fact that Rasputin could go in and out of the Tsarina's private apartment whenever he pleased, and that he went in and sat with her when she was in her bed; but when a jealous lady-in-waiting reported this to the Tsar and put her own interpretation upon it, the Tsar dismissed the woman, saying that she evidently did not and could not understand. And what she, and many others, could not understand was what the best observers at the Court will tell you:

It was the piety and, if you please, the superstitions of the Tsarina that Rasputin appealed to; that he had to be to her what she was and what she expected of him—pure. And one reason why he had to play that part with her was because he was playing the other part with so many other women that there was a scandal at court, in the city, and all over Russia. He had to have the Tsarina believe, not only that these reports were not true, but that there was another explanation of these "lies." The all-powerful Empress must know that that unconventional but perfectly innocent and deeply religious intimacy which he had with her, was what he "had to have with other women to do for them the pious service he was doing for her and her family and her poor distracted Russians."

The Tsarina was the clean center from which Rasputin radiated his conquest of Russian women and, through them, of Russia. It was monstrous. After he had at his feet most of the ladies of the Court, he moved out into "society" and spread everywhere his practical doctrine of ecstatic sinning and repenting together. There was raging and gnashing of teeth among the men, and there was reason for it. Rasputin spared no one he could reach: he took not only wives, but mothers and daughters. It became a sort of craze, a sickness; it was a panic of virtue.

But the real sin of Rasputin, the crime that caused his death and the fall of the Tsar, was that he took the powers of the Tsar which the Tsarina gave over to him, to sell them out for bribes. His price was not only money; it was sometimes women and always it was more power; but he took money.

Bribery was common in Old Russia; it was worse than it has ever been in the United States. Bribery was well-nigh universal in the political government. But Rasputin violated the law and order of bribery and corruption. He sold for bribes offices and acts which belong by right to the field of what we call honest corruption. He sold out the interests.

That is to say, this peasant-pilgrim-statesman was corrupting the foundations, not only of Russia, but of the corruption of Russia. He was a traitor to the system.

ALSO he was a traitor to his country in the popular sense. It is believed by the Russians of all degrees, of all classes at the capital, that Rasputin sold out to the Germans. The truth of this will come out in the trial of some of the ministers he appointed, on the charge of treason which they stand accused of in prison. Sufficient for the present is it that the Russians generally believed for a year before he was killed that he was the agent through whom the Germans managed to have one kind of ammunition go to a battle-front where there was another kind of guns; and to have whole armies marched into positions where the German army could annihilate them.

No wonder, then, that for a year before his assassination, all Petrograd—fathers, brothers, and sons, mothers, sisters, and daughters—all the upper classes, were speaking of "It." They've talked of "It" as the Germans used to talk of "Der Tag." "It" was the killing of Rasputin. "It is to be done next week." "I know who is going to do it." "General —— will do it; he said so himself." "Prince —— swore he'd do it." And yet "It" wasn't done, not for a year; and the fear grew, the crazy, superstitious horror. "It" was attempted, but miraculously "he" escaped. He looked out of his beautiful blue eyes, and his would-be assassin didn't strike.

It took a woman to get it done, a lady who loathed and feared Rasputin, but who was not afraid.

Mr. Steffens will conclude the story of Rasputin in the October number.

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THE SAMMIES IN PARIS

Photograph by Paul Thompson

"VIVE LES POILUS D'AMÉRIQUE!"

This is from a personal round-robin letter sent by Dorothy Canfield Fisher to a group of American friends. Mrs. Fisher is a well-known American novelist who has been directing the publication of a magazine for the war-blind in Paris for nearly a year. With her husband and little daughter, she witnessed France's welcome to the American troops on July 4th.—THE EDITORS.

THIS is July 5th now, and I don't want to send this letter off without telling you about our part in the Fourth of July celebrations. We had succeeded in getting a room with a balcony on the Rue de Rivoli, where the American troops were to pass, and we were there at half-past nine, expecting the troops about ten. There was a very large crowd, the usual prosperous, bourgeois, holiday Paris crowd in that quarter of the city, women with folding chairs, well-dressed elderly men and lively, well-turned-out children.

Just before the procession was announced, an aeroplane gave an exhibition of fancy flying not more than a hundred and fifty feet above the heads of the crowd. I have seen a great deal of air gymnastics since I have been in France this time, but never anything approaching the dizzy wildness of those swoops and dives. We were all carried away with enthusiasm over the airman's extraordinary mastery of his machine, and the roar of applause drowned out the noise of his motors. But I would be surprised if others there didn't have the same idea that I did—that it was a very foolhardy business to do all that over the heads of an immense crowd.

With one final double bow-knot, he dashed off as the music was heard, and the worn blue uniforms of a band of old Territorials appeared in front of the long column of American khaki. The enthusiasm was very great, everybody shouting, waving

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flags, and throwing flowers. The men looked very much better turned-out and marched much more smartly than they had the day before, on leaving the station. Everybody comments on their long, loose-jointed, rolling stride, which is very different from the French quickstep.

The moment they had gone by, John, Sally and I rushed across the street and down into the Metro, because I was very anxious to see the reception in one of the poor quarters of Paris. We made a short cut to a place near the end of their march and reached there three-quarters of an hour before they did. The contrast between the crowd we had seen on the Rue de Rivoli and the crowd there, was astonishing and dramatic. On the Avenue Dumesnil people were five and six deep as far as the eye could see up and down the long street, and hardly a person who did not evidently belong to the working classes. In that part of Paris all the children had been let out of school and stood in lines on the curbstones, little pathetic, rather pale and pinched, city-poor-quarter children, each with a tiny American flag and a tiny flower. The working girls were there from the factories, still in their work aprons, with their sleeves rolled up, and mothers with numerous families, who had brought the entire brood out to welcome the Americans.

We walked for a long distance back of and through this crowd, stopping from time to time to listen to what they were saying. One woman, jumping up and down with excitement, said: "Oh, I am *so* glad I am going to see them; I never saw any Americans in my life." I gathered from her accent that she expected them to wear feathers and paint their faces with war paint. I can not begin to tell you the atmosphere of genuine friendliness and evident good feeling which permeated this enormous crowd. I never felt anything like it in my life. We stopped finally just before the turn into the little Rue de Picpus, where Lafayette's tomb is situated, and waited for the troops to come.

Photograph from Underwood and Underwood.

"EVERYBODY COMMENTS ON THEIR LONG, LOOSE-JOINTED, ROLLING STRIDE, WHICH IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE FRENCH QUICKSTEP."

When they arrived, they were walking bouquets, having been showered with flowers all along the way. Every button had a

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flower stem twisted around it, their hats were all wreathed, and every rifle barrel had a bouquet on it. The officers in front had their saddles banked with flowers, and what was even more significant of the warmth of the welcome given to them was that their Anglo-Saxon self-consciousness and stiffness had entirely disappeared, and the men whom we had seen on the Rue de Rivoli, slouching along with a rapid, powerful American gait, without a glance to right or left, were now flushed and smiling, nodding and exchanging inarticulate greetings of friendliness with the people who rushed out from the side to give them more flowers and to shake their hands and to touch the big American flag which they carried.

We were swept along by this crowd, and were not at all sorry to find ourselves, all three of us, marching rapidly beside the soldiers in the midst of the dense crowd of working people who accompanied them, filling the street solidly from the houses on the one side to the houses on the other side.

I listened with all my ears, as you can imagine, to the comments that were made, and as everybody was talking at the top of his voice, to be heard above the din, I caught a good many, some of them amusing. A great many times they said: *"Oh, ils sont fameux"*—they're fine. I heard several times: "How tall and thin they are!" Once or twice, with a hearty emphasis, almost of admiration: "Heavens, how ugly they are." (And this was really true. I didn't realize, until I saw a mass of them together, how the Lincoln type of powerful, raw-boned, sincere ugliness has persisted in many Americans); and of course a thousand times *"Vive les poilus d'Amérique."*

One working woman walking in front of me, carrying a baby, kept saying: "It makes me want to cry when I see their flag here," and an old man said: "I hope there is a German spy on every street corner."

But what pleased me most of all was what a middle-aged, middle-class woman on the street-car going home said to me after she noticed John's uniform. She said: "Every time I see the American flag it makes me think: 'No the Germans were wrong. Ideals are the realest things there are.'"

The flowers were still showering down just like something you read about. I never saw it before. The soldiers were really walking on flowers and had their arms full besides. A big rose fell into Sally's hands, and I called to her, above the roar of the cheering, to give it to the American soldier by whose side she was trotting and to tell him she was a little American girl. She handed it to him but was too shy to say anything, so I called out to him: "It is an American child." I saw his lips moving as he called the attention of the other men in his line, and as they marched they all leaned forward with a very friendly look of surprise and pleasure at Sally. I suppose in that utterly foreign crowd it must have seemed very strange to them to see a child of their own nationality.

THERE were almost no policemen in that quarter of the city and very little effort was made to restrain the crowd from doing as it pleased; and what it pleased was to rush into the streets as the flag went by and join itself to the procession. It was an awful crush and I never heard such a noise in all my life; but I never was in a more orderly crowd than that very poor and very excited one. I won't say that the three Americans who were in the midst of it weren't almost as excited as the French.

It was impossible, of course, to get into the Cimetière de Picpus, although, as an American Ambulance family, we had a right to. But I didn't want to hear any speeches anyhow. To have heard a professional politician orate after having heard for over an hour that great, continuous roar of deep popular emotion, would have been too great an anti-climax. So we profited by being in an eddy near a side street, slipped out and took the Metro over to the nearest restaurant. We were very tired, but really very happy, as we sat there watching the American flag in with the other Allied flags fluttering over the restaurant door.

Coming—in October—Jackson Gregory's Great Western Serial,

"Judith of Blue Lake Ranch"

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"BETWEEN FRIENDS"

By Holworthy Hall

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER DE MARIS

THE EATER OF APPLES SEEMED ABOUT TO BURST INTO PLATITUDE, BUT RESTRAINED HIMSELF.

UNLESS Boyd Watson had been a sincere and an incorrigible optimist, the Tuesday morning ultimatum of the third vice-president would inevitably have sent him diving headlong into the very nearest harbor of refuge to drown his sorrows. The third vice-president, being a financier of the dangerously bucolic type which, with the muffler cut-out open, eats apples during banking hours, was also of the school which is frankly unimpressed by that famously unguarded statement of Mr. Morgan.

What he wanted wasn't a testimonial of character, but a sworn list of tangible, liquid assets, and the deposit of a few convertible 5's of some solvent railroad as *prima facie* evidence of good intentions. Additional discounts, he said, were out of the question, except on some such foundation, and in any event the current note must be paid when due. Otherwise, he said, the natural consequences must naturally occur, and the protest fees and concomitant expenses would total about fifteen dollars and a quarter.

But Boyd Watson, however disillusioned, wasn't one of those persistent somnambulists who confuse poetry with truth, and argue that if kind hearts and simple faith were good enough security for Tennyson, they ought to be good enough for a loan committee. Nevertheless, he was sufficiently innocent to believe that a two-name acceptance is the noblest work of the Federal Reserve, and that he would encounter no serious difficulty in persuading one of his many friends to make that pomologist of a third vice-president ashamed of himself.

He rose buoyantly, and put on his hat.

"All right, Mr. Knapp," he said with the utmost cheer. "We'll let the other items wait until later. I'll take care of the note Thursday morning."

The eater of apples, looking pointedly at his desk calendar, nodded, and seemed about to burst into platitude, but restrained himself.

"I hope so," he rejoined; and Watson, who was only twenty-five, and correspondingly lacking in the groveling tendency which bankers love on such occasions, went joyously out to find a friend with either a signature, or five thousand dollars for rent.

Now according to the unemotional reports in the newspapers, money in New York was "plentiful." The public, to judge from the language of the technical writers, had it in bundles, and the banks had it in bales. But as Watson telephoned blithely to numbers in John and numbers in Rector and numbers in Broad, he was increasingly aware that prosperity, instead of covering the city as with a luxurious, enfolding

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blanket, had shelled it with erratic explosives, which had landed more or less at random.

Miraculously, his friends, without exception, had come through the bombardment unscathed. One by one they offered condolences and gratuitous suggestions; they spoke hazily of possibilities in the future and vowed that if fortune overwhelmed them, they would esteem it a favor to be privileged to overwhelm Watson in turn; they declared that in the present condition of things he shouldn't experience the least trouble in locating as much as he wanted; yes, twice as much. P. S.—Somewhere else.

At six o'clock, when he desisted temporarily, he had received the regrets of a full platoon, and the contingent promise of three hundred dollars, a week from Friday.

Then, because the batteries of his self-esteem needed recharging, he dined contemplatively at his college club, put on a new and successful tie, and went to call on a girl who had mildly encouraged him to suppose that she understood him perfectly.

He found her in an apartment overlooking the Drive, and within the first half-hour she deduced that there was something on his mind. Eventually she solved the mystery, and became an angel of sympathy.

"Why, yes," admitted Watson, without guile. "I didn't realize I was that transparent, but as a matter of fact, I'm in the same boat as that exporter in 'The Merchant of Venice'—you remember—'my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my bond'——"

"Is—is forfeit to the—the——"

"The Tenth National Bank on Thursday morning," said Watson. "But the traits of the two gentlemen are precisely the same."

SHE BROUGHT FROM ITS NEST OF WAXED PAPER A MEAGER SHEAF OF CARNATIONS; TO BE EXACT, SEVEN OF THEM.

"Really?" Miss Frye was alarmed.

"It's so real," said Watson happily, "that along about Saturday afternoon, if you'll come over to the Tombs or Ellis Island, or wherever they incarcerate us poor endorsers, and bring some tracts and a couple of ham

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sandwiches with you, I'll wolf 'em down and rattle the gloomy bars of the dungeon for you and——"

"Oh, *don't!*" exclaimed the girl, shivering. She was a noticeably pretty girl—that would go without saying, if you knew Watson—and she was very prettily dressed in old blue and silver (a contrasting effect which, in supplementing her eyes and complexion, carried out her very carefully studied intention) and categorically she was as delectable and expensive a little girl in her outward aspect as a man of Watson's taste and resources would unerringly select as a prospective tenant for a Westchester bungalow of seven rooms and a garage without any car in it. Her father was a steel specialist with broken nerves and a scandalous income, and it was of the latter attribute that his daughter thought at this moment. "You're joking," she said, as a judicious preliminary.

Watson laughed pleasantly. "The humor of it," he remarked, "is on the other foot. Oh, it'll work itself out all right. Tomorrow I'm going to see a real friend of mine—Harry Wayburn; he's a book publisher—and he'll fix it up for me some way. I shouldn't have bored you with it."

Miss Frye regarded him with grave suspicion. "Boyd," she said, "I don't believe you're half as confident as you think you are!"

"Don't you?"

"No, and—what if your friend isn't friendly?"

"Harry Wayburn? Why, you don't know him! I haven't seen him for six months, but he's——"

"But I *do* know him," said Miss Frye, with emphasis. "I've met him lots of times. I met him at Ladies' Day at your club last winter, and somebody brought him up to call a little while ago, and he's been coming regularly ever since. I just didn't know he was a friend of yours, that's all. It must be the same man—he's about your age, short and dark, with a stiff little black mustache——"

"That's Harry! Curious—I didn't know you'd run across him. He's a wonder, isn't he? Well, we've been as close as Rhine wine and seltzer ever since freshman year. He's making a wonderful thing out of his business, and—you probably don't know how a crowd like ours sticks together. Why, when we were living in the same place, there simply wasn't any question of private ownership—everything belonged to the crowd in common—from cash to spats and overcoats. Harry'll just bring out his checkbook, and I'll go back to the bank and hoot at 'em."

"But if he shouldn't——"

"Crash!" said Watson, gesturing. "'And another redskin bit the dust!' Only he *will!* That's one of the certainties. That's why I'm not worrying. You've got to grasp the facts, Mary, it's a small agency I'm running, and it doesn't take a lot of backing. What I want isn't much, and conditions justify it, anyway. And Harry and I are old, old friends. Just now, of course, when the war may tie up so many shipments——"

"I was wondering," she mused, "if father couldn't do something."

Watson was instantaneously alert. "Mary—now listen! I don't want—look here! You mustn't say *one word* to your father or anybody else! You mustn't! Please don't think—oh, Mary! I didn't mean to bark at you, but you see how it is! I couldn't let you do that—it would—why, he'd never get over it—never! He wouldn't be interested in a tiny little affair like mine, and besides——"

Miss Frye was of a heightened color when she interrupted him. "Boyd! I don't think you're very considerate——"

"I'm more than that—I'm unutterably grateful. I can't even begin to tell you how grateful I am. It's—well, it's just the sort of thing you'd think of—only if you mentioned it to your father, or intimated it in the *least*, it would hurt me terribly!"

"Hurt you! How?"

"By making it—why, it would spoil everything!" he said hastily. "Please take my word for it, and don't breathe a syllable! It wouldn't be politic. Harry Wayburn'll do anything under the sun for me, and the next time I see you I'll be positively arrogant!"

Before she could reply, a maid paused in the doorway, and hesitantly advanced, bearing a long, slim parcel from which depended the labeled tag of an unknown florist. Miss Frye accepted the offering, the maid departed, *allegro*, and Watson produced his knife.

"No, they're not mine," he denied. "Let me cut the string."

She brought from its nest of waxed paper a meager sheaf of carnations; to be exact,

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seven of them—the florist's half-dozen. Watson, gasping, recalled his own profligacy on many occasions, in matters of this sort, and involuntarily glanced at the card in Miss Frye's fingers.

"Why—that's funny!" she said, meeting his eyes. "We're just talking about him!"

The muscles of Watson's face twitched as he inspected the handful of pinks. In his imagination he beheld the Latin florist, haggard and harassed, calculating the overhead before he ventured to bestow a convalescent gardenia, gratis, upon the purchaser.

"Harry Wayburn? Talk about coincidence!"

"Yes—wasn't it nice of him?"

Watson, not entirely without mental reservations, opined that it was excessively nice of him. When he was striding homeward, however, after learning a series of unrelated facts about his friend whom he hadn't seen for months, he permitted himself a grin of retrospect and of doubt.

"Gosh! Harry's serious about her, too!" he said, ruefully, to himself. "That *is* a coincidence! And he sends her half a dozen pinks! Thunder! I never thought Harry was as tight as all that! And yet they say he's making money——"

"BOYD," HE SAID, "I'M SORRY. YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT NO MATTER HOW GOOD FRIENDS TWO MEN ARE, THEY CAN'T GO AHEAD IF MONEY—OR A WOMAN—COMES BETWEEN 'EM."

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In the long run, of course, a citizen of the world should expect nothing but friendship from his friends, go directly to experts when he needs advice, and carry collateral in his side pocket when he asks for credit. This procedure is both efficient and economically sound, and readily commends itself to every capitalist, banker, and professional counselor. It makes for harmony and specialization, and nobody's feelings are hurt.

But Boyd Watson who, at twenty-five, still nourished the delusion that friendship embraces a triple alliance, made a luncheon appointment with his friend Wayburn, and kept it punctually. In the lobby of a vast hotel they came face to face at the stroke of one, and clasped hands, and grinned in fraternal satisfaction.

"This is great!" said Wayburn, appreciatively. "Glad you telephoned me, you old pirate—I haven't seen you in a dog's age!"

"It's a big city, Harry—*too* big. I've been intending to get hold of you for months."

"That doesn't make any difference—we ought to be together oftener. Where'll we eat?"

"Why—here," said Watson. "Unless there's some other place you like better. It's squarely opposite your building—I thought you came here regularly."

"Hardly!" Wayburn sniffed. "These joints rob the life out of you."

"It's quieter in the main dining-room," said Watson, leading the way.

When they were seated, they grinned at each other again; but Watson, although he thought to discern true affection in the countenance of his quondam associate, was suddenly and unreasonably apprehensive. Since their last congress, Wayburn had somehow changed; his mental attitude was curiously detached, aloof. The impulsiveness of his undergraduate days, even of his first years in New York, had deserted him utterly; Watson's analysis crystallized abruptly into a single phrase—New York had got him!

"We'll make it dutch," said Wayburn, ignorant of his friend's original intention to act as host. "Good Lord! Chicken soup thirty cents! Highway robbery pure and simple! You must have hypnotized me, Boyd! If I'd known you intended to eat here——"

"Why, I took it for granted, Harry!"

"Club sandwich and coffee," said Wayburn to the waiter. "Well, now, how is everything?"

"Not too good—but I hear you're doing wonderfully."

"Twenty to twenty-five thousand." Watson whimsically recalled a favorite quotation from freshman year—the epigram which claims that modesty is the lowest of the virtues, and a confession of the deficiency it indicates.

"And yet you complain about these prices?"

"Sure I do," said Wayburn. "It's plain idiotic to come to a hotel like this when you can get all you want at the Merchants' for half a dollar. I won't stand for it."

"Evidently you're saving something, Harry."

"I should say I am! Aren't you?"

"On the contrary," said Watson, leaning forward. "That's what I want to talk to you about."

But he hadn't progressed beyond the stage of exposition when Wayburn, very serious, stopped him.

"Boyd," he said. "I'm sorry. You know as well as I do that no matter how good friends two men are, they can't go ahead if money—or a woman—comes between 'em. It can't be done. Now you and I've gone along for a good many years without any obstacles, and I think a heap too much of you to ruin the whole shooting-match by any such deal as this. I like you better than anybody else I know, and I'm not going to risk losing you. I'm sorry you brought it up, because if I say 'No,' you may feel badly about it, and if I say 'Yes,' it would put both of us in a mighty embarrassing spot. No matter which way it breaks, it's bad. You take it from me—there's nothing in it! We've got to keep money out of our relationship, or——"

"But, my dear *man!*" protested Watson earnestly, "I'm asking you for two reasons; one is that you've *got* the money, and the other is that you *are* a friend of mine! I tell you, I'm in a corner. This won't be simply a convenience; it'll be a life-saver. Ninety days is plenty. I didn't come to you until I had to. I'm asking you——"

"But it isn't business-like, Boyd!"

"Who said it is? Of course it isn't! It never was. I'm not trying to drag you into a business proposition—I want a loan out of friendship, with no other consideration at

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all! I want you to shut your eyes and jump! And I'll guarantee that you'll get your money back!"

Wayburn drank deeply of coffee, and shook his head. "Boyd, you don't comprehend what you're proposing. I could write you a check this minute. Suppose I did, and you gave me a note——"

"That isn't necessary. Let one of my mills draw on me at ninety days, and you endorse my acceptance. That'll do perfectly well."

"It's the same thing—it's on my credit. If it weren't, you could get your discount without my endorsement. Isn't that so?"

"Certainly, but——"

Wayburn shook his head, and demanded a finger-bowl. "It's impossible, Boyd. If anything happened in the meantime, we'd be involved as long as we live. Neither one of us would ever forget it. I tell you, money can't enter into our friendship. It would kill it off in no time. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. That's one of the reasons why I never bought any paper from you—I didn't want any complications. And five thousand dollars, or *fifty* dollars——"

"Harry, don't you remember when all of us were rooming together? When——"

"That was kiddish! Please don't use *that* period as a criterion! All of us were free and easy, then. We didn't have any responsibilities."

"But unless I can stave off these liabilities for a month or two——"

Wayburn frowned, and beckoned to the waiter. "Boyd, I'm awfully sorry. But a loan like that would put a stone wall between us—always. You go up and talk to your bank."

"I *have!* I can't renew a note I've got there now, and it's imperative!"

"Oh!" Wayburn counted out his change, and added a bit of silver for the servitor. "Then it's all the worse. Don't you *see?* You're trying to get me to take a chance that a bank won't—you'll pardon me, but we're putting all the cards on the table—and—that makes it all the more impossible! Honestly, Boyd, it isn't right from any angle. I'll do anything I can to give you a lift——"

"Except," said Watson rising, "in the only way I need. And you admit you could if you would. That's an easy case to diagnose, Harry."

Wayburn flushed. "Was I wrong, Boyd?"

"How do you mean?"

"It's started trouble already, hasn't it?"

"One final word," said Watson, detaining him. "You've got the money—and I give you my oath it'll be ninety days exactly—and if you turn me down, Harry, I'm through! I'm through to-morrow morning. And in spite of that——"

"I'm sorry—this is a devil of a mess, Boyd, but you can't really expect me to do what a bank won't, can you? When it's a bank's *business*——"

"I said this *isn't* business. It's——"

"And friendship," said Wayburn soberly, "won't stand the gaff."

Watson forced a smile, and followed his friend out to the lobby. "Well—if that's your answer——"

"You understand how it is, don't you, old man?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Not sore, I hope? Oh, look here, Boyd——"

Watson, exhaling with abandon, turned away. "No," he said. "Not sore. Not by a mile, Harry! But a mutual friend of ours—somebody I had a chat with recently—wanted to know what I'd do if you took this position. I told her——"

"*Her!*" said Wayburn. "Oh! I know who that was! I meant to tell you I've been——"

"That's unimportant now. I said you were my last hope. But——"

"Boyd! You didn't discuss *me* with the Fryes!"

"But it just occurred to me——"

"Wait a second! Let's get right down to fundamentals. If you had to make the choice, old man, which would you rather have—my friendship or my money? Straight!"

"Which? Why—both, Harry—both. Which would *you* rather do—take a chance on our friendship, or see me go into bankruptcy?"

"No—that isn't a parallel—but if you *had* to choose——"

Watson took his arm. "Harry, I told you I'd tried every other source, didn't I? Well, it's just occurred to me that possibly I'm mistaken. You've been a friend of mine, and you've got the money—but let that pass. You've refused me—flat. I've got to get action *now*, or call a creditors'

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meeting. I've thought of somebody else—it's a dirty, sharp-nosed, rat-eyed little blackguard I've traded with in job lots—and awhile ago he let it drop that he keeps a fat young balance for emergencies. There isn't the faintest reason why he *should* let go of any of it, but while we've been standing here I've got a hunch. I'm not going to bust, Harry—even if you'd let me. You've turned me down—and I'm going to hunt out this man—and ask *him!* He's no friend of mine, and I loathe the sight of him, and I haven't a millionth of the justification I had with you—but—think it over, Harry, will you? You're my friend, and I used to think you were one of my best. You turn me down, and I go to this filthy little Kleingeld, and ask him to do what you won't. *Suppose he comes across? Then* what about our friendship? Think it over!"

THROUGH his steel-rimmed spectacles Mr. Isidor Kleingeld, who gave the appearance of having begun his commercial career when the world was very young, peered rodent-like at Watson, and allowed his nostrils to quiver and the extremes of his mouth to tighten suggestively.

"Ha, ha!" said Mr. Kleingeld without mirth. "Money, money, al-vays money. Vell—dit you figure owit der gommission, Vatson?"

"Commission!" stammered Watson.

The gentleman who dealt in job lots of anything from wood pulp to copper filings, blinked in the affirmative.

"Vatson," he said, punctuating his remarks by tapping his talons on Watson's knee, "it ain't for der boys vit goot credit to come to Kleingeld, *versteh'n?* It ain't for der boys vit *any* credit to come to Kleingeld. It's for der boys vit *no* credit! Der risk is greater for Kleingeld. So it ain't for der boys to get avay vitout a gommission —vat?"

"Well," said Watson, "how much?"

The rat-eyed gentleman surveyed him minutely. "Vatson—I like you. Von of der reasons I like you is pecause you don't talk no foolishness, see? You ain't tried to bluff Kleingeld. You vant money, and you ain't got no kind of segurity. Vell—ven I was tventy years olt, Vatson, I begun to lent money. For tventy years I lent money on segurity—notes. Und every so often I got stuck, Vatson—stuck big! Pecause vat makes segurity ain't der man's name on der note—it's der man's character behint der signature. For der last tventy years, Vatson, I lent money on der

"IT AIN'T FOR DER BOYS VIT GOOT CREDIT TO COME TO KLEINGELD, IT AIN'T FOR DER BOYS VIT ANY CREDIT TO COME TO KLEINGELD. IT'S FOR DER BOYS VIT NO CREDIT!"

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indivitchool. *I look in der man's eyes.* I got to have der gommission, pecause I got to make money for Kleingeld. All I vant to know is—you ain't marriet, Vatson?"

"No."

"Vat a pity!"

"I'm—thinking of it."

"Dot's even better!"

"Why?"

The greasy gentleman laughed metallically. "Pecause," he said, "a feller like you, Vatson, couldn't be a crook und marry der kint of young lady a feller like you vants to marry. So—now, Vatson! If I lent you der money, vill it *safe* your business, or vill it only put off your troubles for a vile? Look r-right at me in der face."

"Why, honestly," said Watson, "I think it'll save it. If I didn't, I wouldn't ask you for it. I'd quit right now."

"Dot's right. Und—suppose I take a note for der amount. You understant me, Vatson, I don't count on der *note!* I count on *you.* I vork on der brinciple dot you'll see Kleingeld paid *sometime,* no matter vot happens to der note. Is der supposition right?"

"Absolutely."

"Der gommission," said Mr. Kleingeld, "vill be two bersend pecause for vonce I von't have der note discounded. I'll keep it in der cash drawer. Der interest vill be fife bersend."

"But Mr. Kleingeld——"

"Und so, Vatson, you von't be hampered if you go to der bank for more accommodation. My bank is der same as yours—der Tenth National. *Versteh'n?*

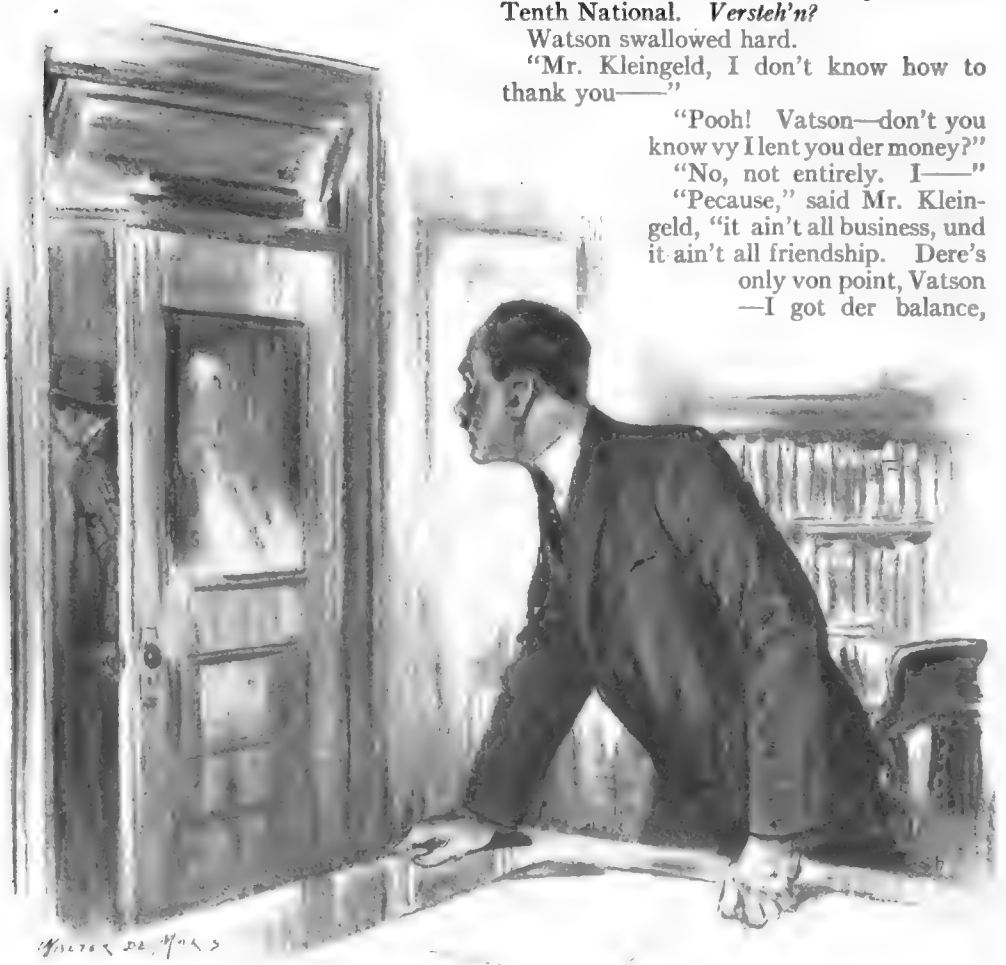
Watson swallowed hard.

"Mr. Kleingeld, I don't know how to thank you——"

"Pooh! Vatson—don't you know vy I lent you der money?"

"No, not entirely. I——"

"Pecause," said Mr. Kleingeld, "it ain't all business, und it ain't all friendship. Dere's only von point, Vatson—I got der balance,



"NOW, *WHAT,* SAID WATSON SAVAGELY TO HIMSELF, "DID THE POOR FOOL MEAN BY THAT?"

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and you neet der loan. I make it to you on accound of der fact *I know* you —und I know you ain't no liar! You're a friend of mine to der extend of my belief—if der note ain't paid at maturity, I belief you'd rob your *grossvater* to see Kleingeld paid. *Dot's* der segurity!"

NATURALLY, one of Boyd's first thoughts was of Miss Frye, and after he had telephoned her the news that evening, he had some difficulty in thinking of any one else—except possibly Wayburn. From a casual phrase of Miss Frye's, he sensed that Wayburn was even now in attendance upon her, and from sundry other bits of evidence, circumstantial rather than direct, he was uncomfortably aware that in Wayburn he might have a lively competitor.

And this disturbed him, not because he was so conceited that he held himself to be above competition, but because he was dimly persuaded that any campaign in which Wayburn was a participant would develop into guerilla warfare. Indeed, Wayburn had already expressed himself clearly in regard to the limitations of friendship; and if auld lang syne couldn't be capitalized in terms of ninety-day credit, there was small hazard that it could endure the hardships of a conflict which had for its objective the favor of a girl like Mary Frye. Watson was worried.

Instinctively, he felt that Wayburn's attitude at lunch could be taken as a fairly accurate barometer of his whole philosophy, and if so, Wayburn had become as adamant in his ethics as an unscrupulous lawyer; he was prepared to trample his way to success without delaying to ascertain the injuries of the wounded—he had adopted the gold standard.

Watson hated to draw the inference, but he couldn't help wondering what would have been the effect upon his own strategic position toward the Fryes if Kleingeld had refused aid. He wondered what the steel specialist would have advised his daughter with respect to two young men, one of whom was highly successful at twenty-six, while the other was in bankruptcy at twenty-five. He wondered, incidentally, what Wayburn might be saying to the Fryes to-night.

Ordinarily, there was nothing very transitory or delicate in Watson's friendships; his affections were sturdy and permanent. He was a dogged supporter of those he admired, and not particularly inimical to those he didn't. But his loyalty to Wayburn had been seriously shaken, because Wayburn had indicated that it was perhaps ill-founded. He was beginning to realize that if friends are to be trusted for nothing more than pleasant conversation, a good comedian may prove a better ally than a college classmate.

He was gradually perceiving that his other friends had denied him support because they literally couldn't afford it, but that Wayburn had based his negative upon sheer selfishness. And if the relationship of eight years wouldn't permit the intrusion of an appeal for reinforcement, Watson couldn't see how it could possibly withstand the strain of a courtship of Mary Frye. In fine, he had passed through the fair-weather zone with Harry Wayburn, and found him agreeable; in approaching the latitudes of unsettled weather, he found him vacillating in his ideals.

Almost any other man would have hurried to the girl, or to her father; Watson went the next day to Wayburn's office and faced the crisis.

"Harry," he said. "I want you to know that I got my loan."

Wayburn was sincerely pleased, and palpably relieved. "That's great!" he exclaimed, reddening a trifle. "That's great! I thought you were over-anxious, old man! And by the way, you bustled off so fast yesterday that you didn't give me time to finish."

"Finish what?"

"Why," said Wayburn, affably. "I *was* going to tell you that five thousand for three months was out of the question, but as a personal favor I could let you have four or five hundred for a couple of weeks, if that would——"

Watson laughed outright. "Now, Harry!" he protested. "We were so confoundedly frank yesterday, let's not be tunneling to-day. Did you ever hear of a bank accepting five hundred in full accord and satisfaction of a note for five thousand?"

"Why—no," conceded Wayburn, "but usually they'll stand a renewal if you pay something——"

"But I *told* you they wouldn't renew."

"*Well*—all I said was—and anyway, I *could* fix you up to-day if you're still shy. I didn't know yesterday how some deals would pan out—but I'd be *glad* to let you have a thousand or so to-day."

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"Listen to me a second," said Watson. "I needed money yesterday, not to-day, and you know it. I came in to see you this morning to straighten things out. You're bluffing now, Harry—now that I'm covered. I suppose this little incident is going to raise Cain with us two—not because of the way *I* look at it, but because of the way *you* look at it. You told me yesterday that friendship can't hold under some conditions. We've tried it out once, and you proved your point. Now we're apparently scheduled to try it again, on the other premise."

"Boyd—this is no place to discuss *that!* You——"

"It's exactly the place. You've put the whole matter on a commercial footing, and this is where you transact your business, isn't it? There's nothing to get mad about—I'm here in the kindest spirit. What I want to know from you is simply this—do you intend to go ahead on the supposition that friendship ceases when these external affairs come up, or——"

"Boyd! You're making a mountain out of——"

"No, I'm not! I'm merely working on actual facts. Are we going ahead to eliminate every factor but the pleasure we get by exchanging reminiscences, or are we going to cooperate somehow so that *one* of us gets what he wants? Because I tell you plainly, Harry, it hurts to feel that I've known you for eight years without establishing anything but uncertainty."

"My dear man, I told you it wasn't personal! It wasn't that at all! It was the sort of thing that smashes down all the finest feeling——"

"But in future—have I got to understand that we're rapid-fire talkers, and nothing else?"

"My dear man, you're talking nonsense! I——"

"No, I'm mighty serious, Harry. Is it each one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost?"

"Meaning money, or—up-town?"

"Whichever way you like."

Wayburn shook his head, and frowned. "This isn't very diplomatic, Boyd."

"Far from it. It's too real."

"The first law of nature is—self-preservation."

"That's your answer?"

"Why—in a way——"

"Then it's enough," said Watson.

"But Boyd! Sit down! Be reasonable! You don't seem to understand this! We can amble along——"

"If both of us amble at the same time we'll both be also-rans," said Watson grimly. "Let's get the unpleasantness over as soon as we can. I'm telling you now, Harry, that this is your own doing. I'm going to play it your own way. I've got to for my own sake. Friendship doesn't count hereafter. Have you mentioned our interview to Mr. Frye?"

Wayburn flushed to his ears. "Boyd, if you're so suspicious as all that——"

"But did you?"

"I told him that it was a damned shame you had to be bothered about such things—it couldn't have prejudiced him in the slightest——"

Watson laughed again, and secured his hat. "All right, Harry. I just wanted to know. Good-by."

He offered his hand; Wayburn stared at it in amazement.

"You say that," he managed, "as though it meant something."

"It does—it really does, Harry. It means just what it says."

Wayburn shook hands limply. "You're making a terrific mistake, Boyd."

"Maybe I am. But—" He turned on the threshold. "For your own good, Harry, I *can't* keep from telling you one thing. This isn't sarcastic—and it isn't nasty. We *were* friends once—and I can't help giving you a tip. Oh, it's partly for my own interests, I admit. But for the moral effect, Harry—so you won't look so much like a tightwad and I like a spendthrift—so both of us will look fairly normal and human—for Heaven's sake, buy 'em in dozen lots! Will you?"

He went out, and Wayburn, wide-eyed, glared at him.

"Now, *what*," said Wayburn savagely to himself, "did the poor fool mean by that?"

THEORETICALLY, of course, any one can trace his pedigree back to Adam. Theoretically, it can be demonstrated that every other worker in the civilized world is laboring directly or indirectly for the especial welfare of any one individual.

Likewise, a sophist can explain how every breath, every heart-beat of the most humble citizen of the most obscure village is of supreme importance in the history of nations.

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If Wayburn had been inclined to trace the causations of his troubles, then, he could have gone back to Adam without hesitancy. He could have cursed Napoleon, or he could have sued Bismarck for damages. But because he was too practical to do this, he compromised with his sense of humor by blaming an unnamed policeman of the Balkans—an officer who sprang too late.

The officer was late, the shot was fired, a prince of the blood was slain; there was a paternal rebuke, a cousinly resentment, reproach, recrimination, a few threats and a mobilization, and Europe was at war. Cargoes of pulp from Sweden were detained, chemicals were suddenly precious, and white paper doubled in value overnight. So that half an hour from the time Boyd Watson left his office, Wayburn, abruptly thrown from the eminence of his safety, was wiring madly to New England, to Delaware, and to Canada, and pouring prayers into the sanctums of the paper brokers.

He had at hand a dozen projects, he had commitments, contracts, warranties—and even the scant tonnage he had snatched from the market by nightfall had erased two figures from his bank account and left him three. And as he sat at his desk in the gathering gloom of evening he was chilled and sickened to remember that his friend Boyd Watson was an independent broker, who yesterday had implored assistance because he couldn't dispose of his stock, or secure new clients within a period of weeks.

And in the meantime Watson was dining with the Fryes.

"It seems to me," said Mr. Frye presently, "that your contracts with your manufacturers are water-tight. Boyd, you ought to do very well in the next six months. How about it?"

Watson looked at Miss Frye, and smiled encouragingly. "Fortunately," he said, "I think I will. I've been so busy getting my business financed that I haven't had much time to put on the selling end. But I've thought right along that prices would be higher."

"It'll be hard on the periodicals," declared the steel specialist, "but you fellows ought to make a killing. I've been thinking it over to-day, Boyd—something that came up last night put me in mind of it—if you're in shape to handle a big volume of business (and by that I mean if you can finance the smaller traders) you won't do anything extraordinary if you do twenty times the volume you did last year—and at twice the profit."

"Good!" said Miss Frye, subdued but exultant.

"Well——"

"What I'm suggesting is this—our own business is going to be dead for months, I believe. Money'll be tighter than ever. I won't have any use for it except to speculate in commodities. Now if you're willing to go into details with me, and I can see a good return on an investment of, say, twenty or thirty thousand dollars, I'd like mighty well to play along with you for awhile."

Watson, his eyes shining, nodded eagerly.

"That's splendid, Mr. Frye. I'd certainly like to talk it over with you."

"There's only one drawback—your friend Wayburn mentioned it last night. Aren't you going to be tied up on your deliveries? Suppose the railroads do what looks inevitable—suppose they put embargoes on all shipments but foodstuffs and munitions? How are you going to carry out your own contracts with your customers? How are you going to avoid being held responsible for delays? Harry Wayburn thought he was protected, and if he is, other people must be, too. What I'm trying to find out is, who's going to hold the bag?"

"Everybody but me," said Watson cheerfully. "Labor's gone up, and chemicals have gone up, and sulphate has gone 'way up, and there isn't much raw material on hand anyway, and consequently prices are bound to hit the ceiling, and I'm only a broker. All I do is to sell on commission, and there you are! No matter what the prices to the public may be, I get my percentage—so the only effect of an increase, as far as I'm concerned, is to increase my income. And thirty thousand dollars! Why, we can turn that over ten times in a year, Mr. Frye!"

"And—Mr. Wayburn?" said Mary Frye gently.

"Oh, he's solid as a rock," said Watson, "but I'm afraid the smaller publishers can't stand the pressure. It's only the big ones that'll weather the storm. And even they may have to raise the price to *their* consumers. Because you see, Mary, the mills can't manufacture enough paper to supply the demand in this country right now. And they've not only got to do that—they've got to supply the world. In order

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SHE LOOKED AT THE CARNATION, AND AT WATSON. HER EYES SOFTENED, AND SHE CAME A STEP TOWARD HIM.

to keep running at all, they've got to pay as high wages as the munition plants, or they can't keep their workmen. They've got to pay tremendously for their chemicals. I wouldn't be astonished if the price of paper trebled—and that'll mean two things: that the small publisher can't last, and that the brokers will make fortunes."

Miss Frye regarded him soberly. "Do you mean you couldn't help your friends, Boyd?"

"How could I?"

"Boyd doesn't make the prices, Mary," explained her father. "The manufacturers make 'em—Boyd simply gets a flat commission on his sales."

"Well—"

"The more I think of it, the better it looks," said Mr. Frye. "If you haven't anything better to do, Boyd, drop in about noon to-morrow, and bring along all the data you think has any bearing on the situation, and we'll try to figure something out. You'll excuse me to-night, I hope—I promised to waste some time down-stairs—the everlasting bridge."

"Surely," agreed Watson. "And—I'll be there at twelve, sharp."

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The steel specialist, lingering only to see that cigars were left prominently and invitingly, took his departure. Watson and Miss Frye wandered into the living-room, and seated themselves properly, ten feet apart. Watson cleared his throat. His gaze fell upon a scattering cluster of carnations in a silver vase, and at the same moment, he noted that Miss Frye was also looking at it.

"Mr. Wayburn was here last night," she enlightened him.

"Yes?" said Watson.

"After what you mentioned before—and from what you've just told us—and from some things that came out through Mr. Wayburn—he must have helped you, didn't he?"

"I beg pardon?" Had Wayburn used this contingency to impute merit in himself, and defect in Watson?

"Why, at dinner you said that you've been getting your business financed? And the last time you were here you said that he was going to put some money in it, and *he* told us—well, he intimated that he's been behind you in this."

"Oh!" Watson saw how Wayburn could profit by the subterfuge. Miss Frye was deeply impressionable.

"That's what made me wonder," she continued, "how it is that if publishers are sure to be injured during the next few months, you can't be as kind to him as he's been to you. Of course, if he's protected, that's different; but when you said you couldn't do anything for your friends anyway, I was just a little astonished, Boyd."

Watson, recalling his recent talk with his friend Wayburn, was troubled. In spite of his declaration of war, he didn't like to retail the facts of the case, especially when they were obviously so conclusive. It struck him that Wayburn might have been induced to his decision by motives less personal than had appeared.

"Of course," he said lamely, "I assume that Harry's strong enough to stand the pressure, but if he ever did ask me for anything——"

"He thinks a great deal of you," Miss Frye assured him. "More than you can possibly realize, Boyd. And I want to tell you—because I don't believe *he* ever will—that when he loaned you that money he must have been going against all his principles and all his plans. He didn't tell me that—I guessed it from other things. But——"

"What other things?"

Miss Frye glanced at the carnations, and smiled fittingly. "He's saving for a purpose, Boyd. He's made a success all by himself, and nobody backed him. He had to work hard—and his ambitions just now are all in terms of money. When he thinks he has enough, he's going to—to see about getting a real home of his own—so every cent he risks now seems to him to push him that much further away from what he's crazy for. You ought to appreciate him, Boyd. I know he does some things that look—well, ultra-conservative, perhaps, to you—but to him they're logical, Boyd."

"I see," said Watson. "So he let you imagine——"

"And so it was a splendid sacrifice he made for you—I just don't want you to depreciate it. I want you to be *over*-anxious to make it up to him."

"Naturally you would."

She looked across the room at him. "You *will* do whatever you can for him, won't you? Not when he asks you—*before* he asks you. It only means giving up part of your percentage at the most, and he gave up infinitely more than that for you."

"If *you* want me to," said Watson, under his breath.

She started in amazement. "Boyd! Why—*Boyd!*"

"It's too bad, Mary, but as a matter of fact——"

"But Boyd! It isn't what *I* want you to do! It's what you *ought* to do—out of friendship, out of gratitude! You—you shock me when you speak like that! Why, he's the most loyal, generous friend you ever had——"

Watson, wavering between tact and truth, equivocated perilously. "There are some things you don't understand, Mary—and if I explained them to you now——"

"Can *anything* explain why you shouldn't do the utmost you can for the friend that's saved your reputation and your business?"

"No—I mean yes! It isn't all on the surface, Mary——"

"I'm beginning to believe," she said with great calmness, "that carnations are even lovelier than American Beauties. They have a little more—soul, Boyd. Don't *you* think so?"

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Nevertheless—purely from a sense of duty—he kept his engagement with Mr. Frye. In the interim he had upbraided himself for his forbearance, he had almost regretted that in his nature there was a certain reluctance to accept the formal theory that all's fair. But there it was; and even although he recognized the general advantages to be gained from the ancient practise, he still recoiled from exploiting himself by destructive criticism of Wayburn. And even if it were partly his own fault that the Fryes assumed that he had been financed by Wayburn, Watson couldn't propose to Mary Frye—for which specific purpose he had gone to the up-town apartment last night—after having removed Wayburn from the race by calling him names.

He couldn't claim that Wayburn had purposely misled the Fryes in order to appear in the light of a martyr to his impoverished classmate, and to seize the sympathies which would be his on demand. On the spur of the moment, he hadn't been able to construct a story which would have cleared the atmosphere without injuring his friend. He had been taken off his feet by the revelation, and having missed his best opportunity for revenge, he had sat silent, weighing the alternatives.

Eventually, he had quitted the apartment without justifying himself, or accusing Wayburn, and thought himself into a state of dizziness. It was evident now that Wayburn's spontaneous offer of the morning had been merely to provide a modicum of truth to support his misrepresentations; to show that he, Wayburn, was a philanthropist. And he had fancied that this would bear weight with Mary Frye.

But Watson kept his engagement with the steel man, and together they bent over the financial sheets and recapitulations.

"*This* is in good shape," approved the specialist. "You've been a trifle short on working capital, though—who's Kleingeld?'

"Kleingeld?"

"This five-thousand-dollar item—what's that for, Boyd?"

Watson shrugged his shoulders. "Borrowed money."

"Oh." Mr. Frye looked sidewise at him. "Very recent, isn't it? This what you meant at dinner about getting yourself financed?"

"Why, yes."

"It's queer, but I had an idea you got that from your friend, Wayburn."

"No-o, Mr. Frye."

"But you asked him for it?"

"Well——"

"Oh, don't be ashamed of it, Boyd. *He* isn't. You did ask him for it? I'm simply curious—I had a different impression——"

"It's immaterial," said Watson. "I got the five from Kleingeld."

Mr. Frye chuckled, and drew a block of scratch-paper toward him. "You're incorporated for ten thousand," he said, "and you evidently own all but two shares of the stock. It looks good enough for me, Boyd, so here's my suggestion. Suppose we increase the capital stock to fifty thousand. I'll pay cash for the additional issue, so the company'll have funds, and then I'll divide the stock with you. Is that reasonable?"

"Reasonable!" faltered Watson.

Mr. Frye put down his pencil, and chuckled again. "Then we'll call it settled," he said. "And let's get the legal side of it started at once. We'd better handle it through my lawyer, if you don't mind. Ready?"

IT WAS two days before Watson could draw a long breath and relax, and it was at precisely the most opportune hour of the day—half-past five in the afternoon—that he answered the telephone, and found Miss Frye on the wire.

"Oh, Boyd!" she said. "*Please* come up to see me!"

"*Will* I!" said Watson.

"Father's told me some awfully surprising things—I want to see you, Boyd!" In her tone there was implied apology which didn't altogether displease him.

"What time?" he queried.

"Half-past eight?"

"On the second," he promised; and from that point ceased to draw long breaths and relax, and became once more a young man of high tension and abject nervousness.

He was as timely as he had promised; he shook hands amiably, and deposited a very small parcel on the nearest table.

"Well," he said. "You've heard the news, I suppose?"

"Wonderful!" said Miss Frye.

"And I honestly think he'll make money out of it."

"He thinks so, too."

"Fine!"

Miss Frye considered the tips of her fingers. "Boyd."

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"Yes?"

"You remember the other night?"

"Rather."

"We were both mistaken—father and I—we thought Mr. Wayburn had really done something for you."

"Did you?"

"Yes, and—he got some praise for it——"

"Did he?"

"Yes. You see—he never said positively that he'd done it—but he let us think so. He let us think you were on the verge of—insolvency—and he saved you. You'd said you were going to him—and I know it was impertinent—but I couldn't help asking him if you had—and I'm afraid I let him know how wonderful I thought it would be if he *did* take care of you——"

"Oho!" said Watson, thinking of his friend's belated offer of a few hundreds or so.

"And—you know how easy it is to get impressions."

"Always—always."

"And then he complimented you so much—so you can understand what *I* thought when you weren't crazy to be equally generous to him——"

"Mary," said Watson, "please forget it."

"No—I want to tell you that I'm sorry—and I've talked to him this afternoon, and told him that under the circumstances——"

"Please don't!"

"And if father hadn't seen your books, and found out who *did* loan you——"

"*Please!*" said Watson. He took the very small parcel from the table, and undid it slowly.

"And you wouldn't say a single word against him, Boyd! That was——"

"Mary," said Watson. "I haven't forgotten one of the last things you said to me—does this mean anything to you?" He placed in her hand a single fresh, dewy, pink carnation—nothing else. "Because," said Watson, a bit unsteadily, "if it's true that there's more in this sort of flower than there is in American Beauties, then this is what I want you to have——"

She looked at the carnation, and at Watson. Her eyes softened, and she came a step toward him.

"There is—in *this* one, Boyd!" she said.

And although he never made her a more definite proposal of marriage than that, and she never made a more specific answer, they both knew, as their lips touched for the first time, that it was all right!

To Boyd Watson, a month or two later, there came an engraved card, at which he stiffened, and then smiled reminiscently, as he told the office boy to admit the gentleman promptly.

The gentleman, who was somewhat less well-groomed than usual, and pronouncedly upset, wasted little time in preliminaries.

"Boyd," he said, "I—I guess you know I wouldn't come to you until I'd tried everybody else in the world—but they've got me! I had a bunch of de luxe editions all ready and they held the presses on me! They're making me pay cash, Boyd—*cash!* I'm out twenty thousand already—and the dealers are canceling right and left! I'm coming to you—just on a wild chance——"

Watson smiled grimly. "As a business proposition, Harry—or friendship——"

"I'm not—I don't know. Don't laugh, Boyd. *You* won! I've got to have money or I'm through inside of a week. You're the only chance there is left—I'm frank, Boyd. *You* don't need to rub it in now, do you? Isn't it enough satisfaction to you to have *me* coming to you—after what's happened? All I want is a month's time—to get my printing done—and consignments out——"

Watson nodded reflectively. "On a basis of—friendship, Harry?"

Wayburn gulped. "If you want—it was a—I'm sorry, Boyd, but—all's fair in love and—Boyd, *can* you be magnanimous enough——"

Watson took out his fountain pen, and gestured with it.

"Harry, I'm not convinced yet, but I'm willing to arrange this proposition on your own terms—the terms you made when I once came to you. I'll take your own code of ethics—absolutely. I won't loan a nickel to any real friend of mine—because it'll breed trouble."

"Oh, Boyd!"

"Not a cent to a real friend—and that, of course, makes it quite possible for me," said Watson, kindly but dispassionately, "to take this method of demonstrating the theory." He opened the big check-book on his desk. "Now, Harry—" He paused and met Wayburn's horrified eyes. "How much did you say you want?"

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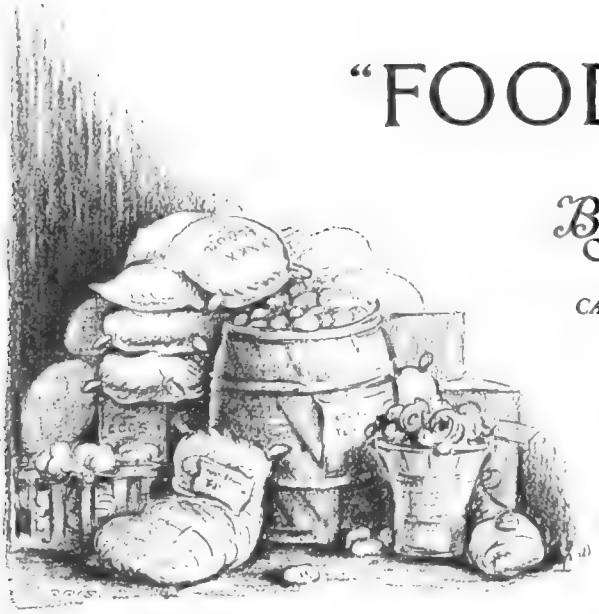

"FOOD FIRST"

By O. K. Davis

CARTOONS BY W. C. MORRIS

MEN, Munitions, and Food—these three are the imperative necessities for the maintenance of freedom in the free world to-day. And the greatest of these is Food!

These three our Allies call upon the American people to supply to them. These three are the stanchions of righteousness and justice in the struggle with the mightiest foe of liberty the world has ever known. And the greatest of them is Food!

Without our men, without our munitions, it is barely possible that the devotion of British, French, Italian patriotism might still avail to meet the hosts of autocracy, and ultimately wear them down. But without our food that is impossible. The real war problem of the American people is to keep that food supply steadily going forward in the most generous volume our united efforts can secure.

"Food First" is the one personal call of the war that comes literally to every man, woman, and child in the entire country. It alone reaches absolutely all of us. No other phase of the struggle touches certainly every individual in the nation.

Not all of us can join the fighting forces.

Not all of us can labor in the fields or factories, producing food or military supplies.

Not all of us can serve in Red Cross and other auxiliaries.

Not all of us can help in administrative or financial capacities.

But every last one of us, old and young, rich and poor, big and little, high and low, no matter where we live or how, no matter what our social or financial condition, no matter what our daily task, can render vital service in meeting the great war food problem which confronts us.

Get the idea of Food First as your war job firmly gripped in your mind, and never let go of it until peace is re-established. Even then take your full time about giving it up.

Don't you want to win? Don't you think we're going to win? Don't you know we've got to win? Well, then, get down to business and help to win!

President Wilson states America's obligation as, first, to feed ourselves; second, to help feed our Allies; and third, to do what we can to help neutrals when that can be done without also helping our enemies.

This means for us, first, produce more; second, consume less; and third, stop waste.

As to the first, during all the spring period when stimulation of production was possible, every energy of every one connected with the Administration, or interested in the genuine solution of the problem, from President Wilson down, was devoted to urging extended effort upon the part of all producers of foodstuffs, throughout the country, to achieve this year the utmost limit of production.

The answer comes, as this is written, in an official crop estimate giving the total of food crops for this year as probably a billion bushels greater than the aggregate of last year's crops.

And that estimate does not take into account the many millions of home gardens that exist this year in direct response to the appeal of the nation's leaders to all the people to produce all the food possible.

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But although we are—on the present showing—producing so much more than last year, there is more than a little danger that this is crowing before we are out of the woods. Of that extra billion bushels—estimated—it is noteworthy that more than half is corn, and only about forty million bushels wheat.

But our unfortunate Allies are inexperienced in the delights of "johnny-cake" and Indian meal. They eat wheat, but they do not eat corn. So to get the full benefit of that extra half billion bushels of corn this year, it is up to us to eat it and to ship the wheat thus released to our Allies.

Moreover, it is to be remembered that this estimate of the corn crop comes when there are yet six weeks or more to go before the corn crop is "made," and in that time weather conditions may occur such as to destroy the whole of that estimated surplus.

AT THIS writing, however, the promise of help from increased production is distinct and fairly generous. It gives all the more encouragement for a steady exhibition of patriotic simplicity and self-control in the execution of the second, and most effective, method of procuring food supplies for our Allies—lessened consumption.

Buy less! Cook less! Eat less! It will do you good. You will save money and lose superfluous fat. The doctors have been telling us for years that we habitually eat too much. We have known all along that we ought to reform, but we never have had an incentive big enough to make us overcome our appetites. Now we've got both the opportunity and the motive.

Hoover tells us that it will require five hundred and forty million bushels of food grains to meet the needs of England, France, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal this year, in addition to what they can produce for themselves. There is no man in the world better equipped with information on this subject than Herbert Hoover.

Canada may be able to supply something like one hundred million bushels, but the great bulk of that half billion and more bushels must come from us. Australia might supply some. Argentina might supply some. But it takes a ship six times as long to go to Australia or Argentina and back as to run across the North Atlantic and back, and the supply of ocean tonnage is not sufficient to stand that strain.

Where are we going to get our part of that half billion bushels to send to our Allies?

Our estimated wheat production is approximately six hundred and eighty million bushels for this year. We need, on the basis of the liberal consumption of previous years, six hundred and forty million bushels for seed, carry-over, and domestic supply. We dare not skimp the seed. We can skimp the carry-over, and it has been done this year, with the result that reserves at this writing are estimated at less than twenty million bushels.

But the estimated surplus of forty million bushels, and what can be obtained by skimping the carry-over, would furnish at the outside considerably less than Canada's hundred million bushels. Where's the rest coming from?

That's just exactly where you, and I, and the other hundred and one million like us come in. *We are going to save it.*

There is another idea to get very firmly in your head and hold fast there. We can do the trick of saving enough food to give our Allies a fair supply easily if we set ourselves to it.

Don't get to thinking only of the comparatively small amount that you alone, or your family alone, can save at one time, or in one day. What any one of us can save amounts to mighty little taken by itself. But keep steadily in mind the fact that in the aggregate we are a tremendous number and a powerful force.

It is the huge bulk of all of us together that counts. Our united strength is colossal. It is our united effort that will win.

And if anything tempts you to think that the American people will not respond to the urgent need for united saving of food this year, just look out of the car window the first time you take a trip of a hundred miles anywhere in this country. You will see every back yard and many front yards blossoming with potatoes, peas, beans, and other garden varieties of food.

There are literally millions of gardens in the United States this year that were not here last year. They are war gardens, and nothing else. They are made simply because the people who made them want to do what they can to help win the war. And the loyal people who will make such an effort to produce additional food will make similar effort to save still more food.

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Keep the bulk, not the individual saving in mind. Remember that if each one of us saved only one ounce of sugar a day it would mean one million one hundred thousand tons for the year.

If each one of us saved one ounce of meat a day, the aggregate for a year would equal two million two hundred thousand cattle.

Save by Ounces

IF IT strikes you as any kind of a hardship to get along with an ounce a day less of sugar or meat, just think of what your German enemies have been doing for two and a half years in order to carry on the fight they have been making.

The German allowance of meat when I was in Berlin last winter was a little less than two ounces a day for five days a week; that is, half a pound a week. How many Americans eat half a pound in a single beefsteak, and repeat the performance several times a week?

Butter is one of the most important foods. A liberal user of butter will spread about a third of an ounce on a single slice of bread. A sparing user would make that much spread two slices.

If all the people of the United States were to forego the use of butter on one or two slices of bread a day, the results would be a saving of about three hundred and seventy-five thousand tons of butter in a year.

Very few Americans have any real comprehension of what may be accomplished in the way of food conservation by careful forethought and concerted action.

If you were living in Berlin now you would get your daily bread, upon the presentation to the baker, or the restaurant keeper, of some little sections clipped from a bread card across the top of which there would run a legend giving the number of the week since rationing began—now about 130.

That means that for more than two and a half years the German Government has measured out to its people their daily allowance of bread. It means that since the early days of 1915 no bread has been sold legally in Germany except in accordance

UNCLE SAM TO THE AMERICAN FARMER: "IT'S UP TO US!"

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with the strongest restrictions of the Government.

And so it has been and is with every other essential article of food—meat, potatoes, butter, milk, sugar, cereals—all doled out day by day in scantiest measure, a measure fixed as far as possible by consideration of what constitutes a properly balanced ration, but determined ultimately by the most careful estimate of the total available supply.

This is the principle and the process of German food conservation. And it is due to unflinching procedure upon that principle that Germany is alive to-day, and still able to menace the freedom of the world. When the German Government began the rationing of the German people more than two and a half years ago, there were those in high place among our present Allies who presented that fact to their peoples as evidence that Germany was approaching the stage of starvation. But that rationing was the very means by which the German Government has prevented the starvation of its people.

Are Bread Cards Coming?

WE SHALL not be able in America by voluntary conservation to match the marvelous economies with food obtained by German discipline. But neither shall we reach a stage of necessity anything like that which Germany has been forced for almost three years to endure.

The natural physical conditions of our country furnish such a tremendous and permanent advantage on our side that even if there were to be put in the hands of our Government powers materially more drastic than those exercised in Berlin—if that were possible—it never would become necessary to put them into use.

They would stand, as it is largely intended the proposed powers carried in the bill pending as this is written shall stand, as a great Economic Policeman, ready for use if the riot starts, but actually putting in his daily hours of watchfulness merely swinging his club, maintaining the peace simply by his adequately prepared presence.

Not so very long ago, before our break with Germany, I sat in the Ministry of Agriculture in Berlin and talked with the Vice-Minister about the preparations of the German Government for the production of food in Germany this year. He spoke of organization, of accumulation of material—fertilizers and seed and machinery. He touched upon the very difficult problem of labor, and spoke of the work the German women were doing in the fields, and of the labor of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war. He talked with the intelligent seriousness of a man who comprehended fully the exceptional difficulties of his problem, but he talked also with the enthusiasm of a man who expected confidently to surmount them.

"There shall not be an idle acre in Germany this year," he said. "If we have good weather we shall produce more food than ever before."

He was a disciple of Prussian autocracy. He meant what he said. He knew what he was talking about. He was announcing a definite program, one that had been conconsidered most carefully from every angle and adopted with deliberation and purpose.

Within Imperial Germany there are 77,000,000 acres of agricultural land. The German army is in occupation of foreign territory equal in area to, if not greater than, Imperial Germany. Within this occupied territory there are the fertile fields of Poland, Roumania, and Serbia, to say nothing of those acres of French and Belgian soil which have been accustomed to produce a greater yield per acre than almost any other soil on earth. Of course these acres are not going to receive the careful attention in this summer of 1917 which has evoked from them the record yield of other years. But from the 77,000,000 acres within Imperial Germany the German Government is asking a response greater than ever before, and from the fields of the occupied territories it is asking all it can get.

On the theory that Heaven helps those who help themselves, the Germans are entitled to help from Heaven in their crop-raising this year. For every one of the elements that go into successful agriculture which can be controlled by human endeavor, they have sought with German thoroughness and energy to render most efficient for the production of this crop. In every one of these elements—labor, fertilizer, seed, physical efficiency—the awful waste of war has made great inroads. To meet this waste the German Government has done just what it does on the field of battle—it has called up the reserves.

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And it has compelled or created reserves, gathering the necessary supply of labor from the military forces at the front, the factories, the shops, the homes, the nurseries, "the cradle and the grave." The call to labor in the fields was paramount. No use to man the trenches if no food was produced to feed the men. Long ago the German Government realized that, in this war, "Food First" was the essence of endurance.

In the very important matter of fertilizers the German Government went patiently to work last fall to accumulate supplies of all obtainable materials in the greatest quantity possible for use this year. A substantial measure of success was secured, especially with potash and nitrates. And it was planned in the distribution of these supplies to consider first those fields which, in previous years, had had least fertilization. By this means, it was believed, an extra spurt would be given to production.

Weather, the element in which there is the smallest degree of human control, is the element of chief importance. Early reports were that Germany has been most fortunate in this respect, but the last news is of drought and blight. Still it must be borne in mind, that even if the purpose of the German Government to produce more food in Germany than ever before is not entirely fulfilled, the harvest may yet be so substantial that fear of collapse from want of food will not greatly torment Germany next winter.

It's Our Job

THAT puts it squarely up to us. For there isn't any use talking about England feeding herself just yet. Whatever she might learn to do under the stimulus of the German assault, when her deer parks are plowed up and her vast stretches of hitherto unproductive soil have been turned to the business of growing food, it is not now within the bounds of the possible. And after what she has suffered and lost, in territory and in man power, in the last three years, there isn't much more chance of France feeding herself than there is of England.

But the call to us is not only to make up the deficiency in domestic supply for England and France—it is to do so on the expensive plan of first filling the maw of the insatiable German submarine. So more and yet more of the products of our acres we must pour into the ocean in order that still more of them may get past these sea wolves and serve the needs of our Allies who are holding the line until our own fighting strength shall be ready to join the battle.

The Wheat Shortage

JUST the other day I sat in the quiet office of the Secretary of Agriculture at Washington and talked over this problem with the man who is tackling the biggest job that has ever developed in that department —Secretary David Franklin Houston himself. Mr. Houston is a quiet man, and he talks in a quiet way, in keeping with the surroundings in his office. He has a keen comprehension of the size of the task confronting the nation, and is serenely confident of the ability of the American people to meet it, if they can only be made to grasp it and to go at it whole-heartedly.

"We are sometimes rather easily excited, as a people," said Mr. Houston, "especially about matters which are not within our individual lines of business concern, and with which as a consequence, we are not familiar. For instance, if anything happens to our supply of wheat and Irish potatoes we are likely to get a little panicky.

"There has been something of that feeling in the country since we entered the war against Germany. We raised more than a billion bushels of wheat two years ago, and last year the crop was only about six hundred and forty million bushels. That is, it was 360,000,000 bushels short of the record crop of 1915—a million bushels of wheat a day less than we had the previous year — approximately 225,000 barrels of flour every day of the year.

"But, that was the shortage as compared with the record, not the average crop. The record crop was more than two hundred million bushels greater than the average crop. The carry-over from that record crop was consequently very much greater than the average carry-over, and even after the exceptionally great exportation of wheat for last year, there was still a good deal left.

"We need, figuring on a liberal basis for human food, for seed and a carry-over of 50,000,000 bushels, about 640,000,000 bushels of wheat a year, and that is just what last year's crop was. That is, there

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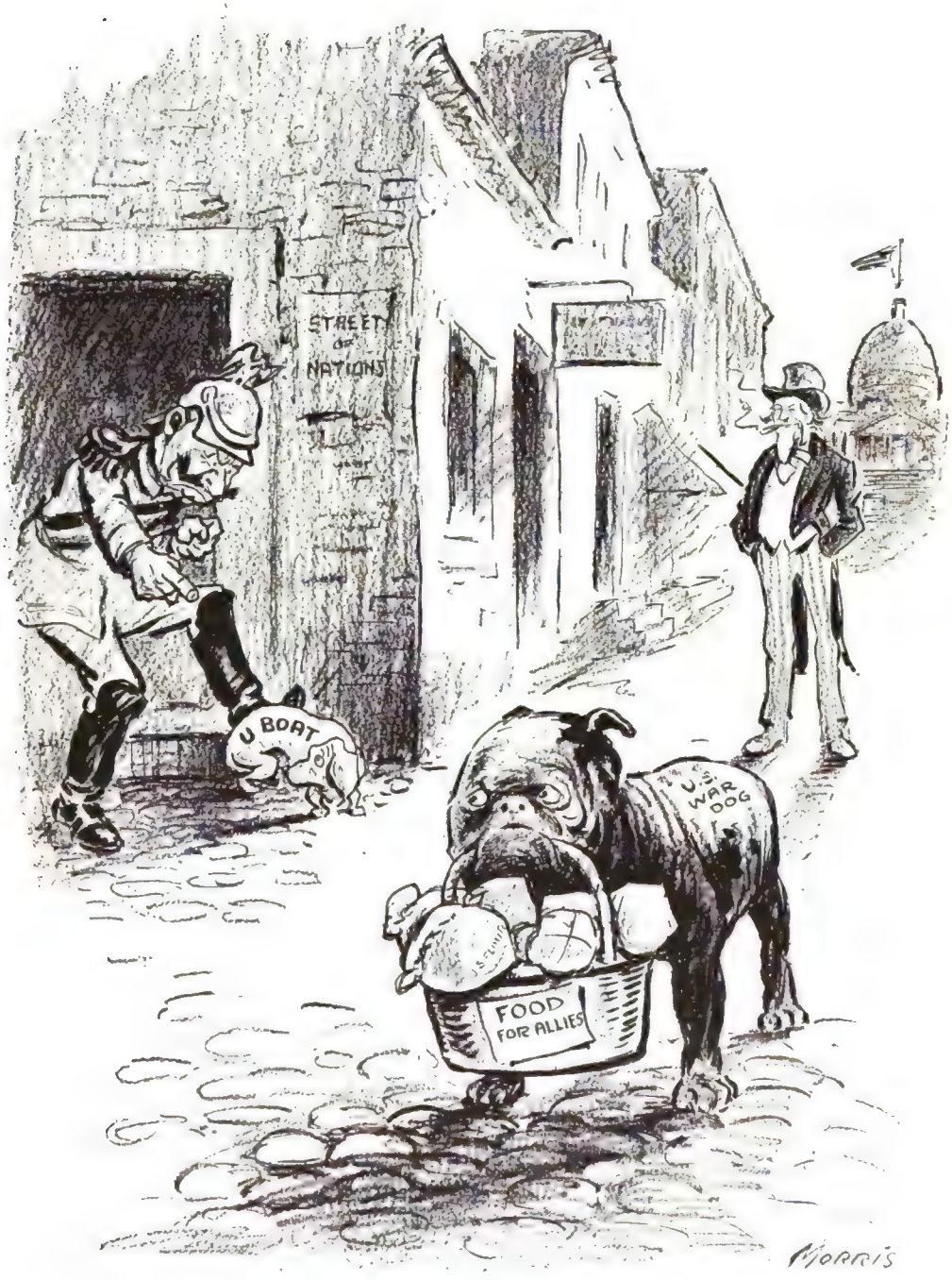

THE KAISER: "SIC 'EM!"

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was plenty for our own need estimated on a liberal basis, but not much, except previous surplus, for export.

The most recent estimate for this year's crop is approximately six hundred and eighty million bushels, which, on the liberal basis of our previous use of wheat, would leave as surplus available for shipment to our Allies only about forty million bushels. But we must have several times that quantity to send them, and the only way we can get it is to save it by reducing our own consumption.

"We have not usually exported any considerable portion of our potato crop. The pre-war average export was less than 2,000,000 bushels, and for 1916 it went up only to a little more than 4,000,000 bushels. But our crop for last year was more than 75,000,000 bushels under the average, and as our per capita consumption is approximately three and a half bushels, requiring practically all of the average production to meet domestic demands, the shortage has been very marked for the last few months.

The latest estimate for this year indicates a very greatly increased production, in fact nearly double that of last year.

No Cause for Panic

"SO WE have had conditions that tend to make our people a little panicky. But there is no real cause for panic. There is, however, great cause both for producing all the food we possibly can this year, and for exercising always the most rigid economy in our use of food, in order to save the greatest amount possible for export to our Allies.

"We can produce an almost unlimited amount and variety of food if we really make up our minds to do so. If the American people can be brought to a fixed determination to produce food to anything like the full extent of their capacity and resources, the food question for all the Allies will be settled, let the submarine rage as it may.

"We have, for example, 951,000,000 acres of land suitable for agricultural purposes in the United States. At present about 45 per cent. of that acreage is cultivated, but only 12 per cent. of that 45 per cent. is returning a full yield. The possibility of development is enormous."

In speaking of this possibility Mr. Houston was not referring to the kind of intensive cultivation that has produced such marvelous returns from the soil of Belgium and other European countries. The Secretary of Agriculture doesn't take much stock in the talk about Americans not being good farmers; about the "unproductive acres" of the United States, when the intensive cultivation of Europe, which loads the soil with labor, is the standard of comparison.

"We are still pioneering in agriculture," he said. "Land is cheap, labor is dear. It would be bad economics for us to indulge in intensive cultivation of the kind that scores such great yields per acre in Europe.

"It is not the yield per acre which is the test, but the yield per unit of labor and capital—the yield per man. On the test of production per man, we beat all the world from one and a half to four and a half times. American labor is the most alert and efficient in the world. The American farmer is the greatest machine-user in the world. What we need to do this year is to make the best use of our facilities for production, and then when the biggest possible crop is produced make the very best use we can of it."

Mr. Houston was not so deeply impressed with the shortage of wheat and potatoes as to advocate the plowing up of golf courses and such things in order to secure larger returns this year. He did not go in for the reclamation of swamp lands that would take four years or more to drain, nor did he display eagerness about undertaking new irrigation projects requiring anywhere from five to fifteen years for completion. He did not get excited about propositions to turn Western cattle ranges into fields for small grains this summer, nor did he lose any sleep trying to figure out the millions of bushels of sod corn that would be raised in 1917.

The Machinery at Hand

MR. HOUSTON believes that much can be done by extending the machinery already in service and by increasing the use made of it.

"The United States has developed the greatest agencies of agricultural assistance in the world," he said. "In personnel, scope, and efficiency they are unmatched.

"It is an interesting fact to recall now," continued the Secretary, "that two great groups of agencies came out of the crisis of the Civil War, and were erected under

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statutes that were signed by Abraham Lincoln. They are the Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant Colleges. There are 17,000 persons connected with the Department of Agriculture, and many others are working through the Land Grant Colleges. Here are services of investigation, conservation, distribution of food products, and education that are unrivaled."

Besides stimulating production, the problem of rendering full war service to our allies in the matter of food supply involves conservation of foods, improving distribution, elimination of waste, and the prevention of manipulation and uneconomic speculation. The question of waste, for instance, is of tremendous importance, but it has been exceedingly difficult to drive home to the people as a whole, perhaps because the waste

in each family, by itself, may be only a small thing. It is the tremendous aggregate that gives this phase of the problem such importance.

"As a nation," says Secretary Houston, "we seem to have a disdain of economizing. In many homes there is a strong feeling that it is 'only decent' to provide more food than will be eaten, and that it is demeaning to reckon closely."

Reducing the Waist

WE NOT only habitually provide more than is needed, we habitually eat more than is necessary—more, in fact, than is good for most of us. The enforced reduction of rations in Germany certainly worked improvement in health for many thousands of Germans for a long time. The characteristic "German paunch" has largely disappeared now, and along with it have gone many of the diseases of the digestive organs that used to be so common.

The experts of the Department of Agriculture have calculated that the waste of food in the United States by careless preparation, oversupply, and in such ways, amounts to more than $700,000,000 annually. That is, it is almost as much per year as the entire national debt was before the war.

It is in the families of moderate means and of wealth that the food waste is so great. The expert report is that it results in large measure from bad preparation and bad cooking, from improper care and handling, from serving too many courses and an over-abundant supply of the different courses, as well as from failing to make use of food not consumed at meals. It is a common thing, say the Department experts, to find that twenty per cent. of the edible portion of potatoes is thrown away in preparing them for cooking. That is the result of careless paring.

The careful German does not risk such a waste. In all his public kitchens, hotels, and places where food is prepared in quantities he has a machine that takes the skin off the potatoes. It is a huge grater that works under a water jet. It

HANDS ACROSS THE SEA: "SAVE SOME FOR US."

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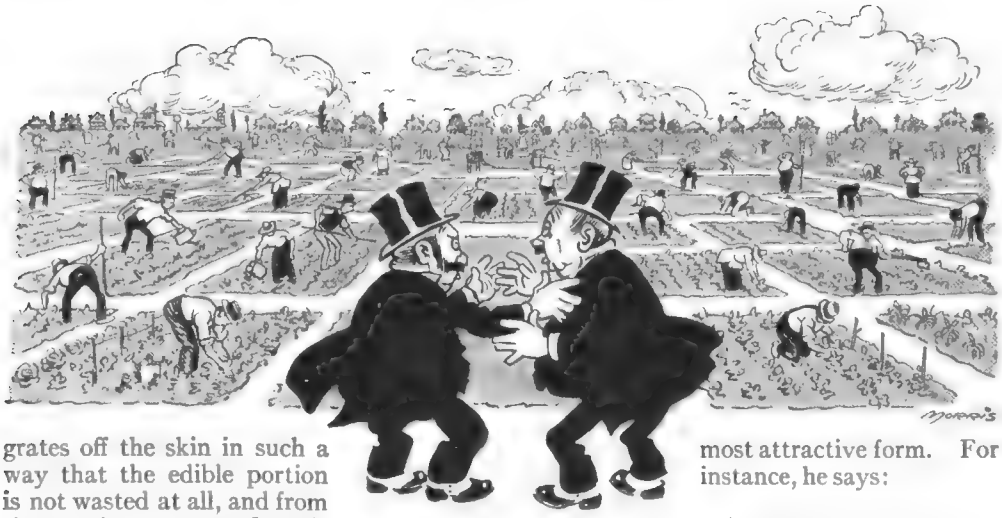

FOOD DEALERS: "WHERE DO WE COME IN?"

grates off the skin in such a way that the edible portion is not wasted at all, and from the gratings potato flour is made, which materially helps out the wheat and rye flour in making bread.

It is not only in distributing and preparing food that our German enemies show their thrift. They eat what they get, leaving none and wasting none. Waste of food is reduced to an absolute minimum in Germany.

"Preach the gospel of the Clean Plate!" cries Herbert Hoover, urging our people to economize and prevent waste.

Our German enemies not only preach that gospel, they practise it. They practise it because they have to, of course, and not merely because they want to, but they maintain the practise because they desire and are determined to win the war.

Remember that our supreme task is to beat these Germans in war. If they have any methods which make for efficiency or economy that we can not improve upon we ought to profit by their example. Necessity in the form of food scarcity will not compel us to stint ourselves as they, perforce, are stinted, but the German example of endurance under dire adversity may well stimulate us to real and sober effort at effective economy.

In the effort to stimulate attention to the food problem the Department of Agriculture has published a number of bulletins, called the "Food Thrift Series," which are filled with interesting information set forth in catchy phrase. The Department has the services of an epigrammatic advertiser who is driving food facts home to the people in most attractive form. For instance, he says:

"Somebody has to raise everything you eat—Do your share!"

"Demonstrate Thrift in your Home!"

"Make your ground work for you and the Nation. Idle ground is waste."

This lesson has been well heeded by the whole country. The back yards of the United States, and many of the vacant lots, are filled with well-regulated potato patches and cabbage fields. The stimulation of production of garden-truck promises now to be of help to the nation not only in the matter of actual increase of food, but also in furnishing a certain relief from the strain on transportation. For practically all of this garden production is at home, and the result is that a part of the winter's supply will not require the amount of transportation heretofore used in that way, thus setting it free for important service elsewhere.

The epigrammatic advertiser of the Department of Agriculture gave attention to the matter of saving as well as of production of food. With commendable emphasis he placards this sound advice:

"Don't fatten your garbage pail at the expense of your bank account!"

To millions of the dwellers in these United States that pungent sentence has carried a new and striking thought. It has emphasized a new point of thrift. The garbage

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pail has a companion in the way of wasting food which draws the fire of the Department advertiser in this shot:

"Don't pour nourishment down the sewer!"

The common ways of wasting food are hard hit by this artist in epigrams. He says:

"Feed your own family first. Don't feed high-priced food to hogs or chickens. Don't send valuable food to the incinerator or fertilizer heap."

In stimulating production and in conserving foods and eliminating waste the psychological effect of public urging of patriotic national duty could be counted upon to accomplish much. More could have been done, to be sure, if the Government had had certain powers which it did not have; but still, as it was, a great deal was possible. In the paramount matters of improving distribution and preventing manipulation or speculation, however, additional powers were absolutely necessary in order to secure any material accomplishment, and the grant of proper powers would be of enormous assistance in the stimulation of production, conservation, and elimination of waste.

HOOVER—OUR ECONOMIC POLICEMAN.

For example, the very first thing to do, when our food problem descended upon us, was to find out exactly where we stood; that is, how much food there actually was in the country, of what it consisted, where it was, in what ownership, and how it could be moved. But there was no power in the Government or in any other agency to undertake such a task. The Department of Agriculture has been obtaining a certain amount of information on certain lines of food supply, but it has all been given voluntarily to the Department, and under conditions which have prevented the maximum beneficial use of it from being made. The Department has had no power to ask the questions necessary in order to secure such information accurately, nor has it

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had power to compel any one to answer such questions as it did ask.

The Food Bills

TO EQUIP the Government with the powers necessary to adequate handling of this great "Food First" problem, two bills were prepared and introduced in Congress. There each of them has been subject to great controversy and attack. As this is written, one of them—that designated, for convenience, as the "Food Production" Bill, has been passed by both Houses, with certain differences, and is awaiting joint action in conference. The other, called the "Food Control" Bill, is still the center of heated controversy.

"The first thing to do, under the Food Production Bill," said Mr. Houston, "will be to make a quick inventory of the situation. It has been objected that it will take years for us to make a census of foods. But that is nonsense. Such a census would be of not the least value. What we want is a reasonably sure knowledge of what there is in the country, and we can find that out in a few days. Afterward we can maintain a system of monthly checks on this report, and when advisable make another inventory."

As I listened to Mr. Houston saying that, my mind went back to that winter day in Berlin when I sat in the office of a distinguished German official and heard him say:

"The first thing to do with such a problem, is to make a 'statistik.' We had ours made in ten days after we started."

Mr. Houston went on to outline the steps to be taken under the Food Production Bill following the national inventory. The second move will be to extend the county agency system to every rural county in the country. There are 2850 of them. With the means thus far placed at its disposal the Department has been able to organize only 1300. These agencies are of assistance to farmers in conservation and in marketing, as well as in organizing and stimulating production.

A third step will be to extend the present market machinery and news service, and to assist farmers in marketing their crops, especially perishables. This service has already rendered valuable assistance, although organized on only a small scale, and not nationally.

The fourth step will be a special attack upon plant and animal diseases, with emphasis upon hog cholera and the cattle tick, which now reduce our annual meat production by many millions of dollars. Extra efforts will be made in the case of the smaller animals and poultry.

The Department of Agriculture, the Land Grant Colleges, and the state institutions all together are now in touch with 150,000 local agents. Through the Bureau of Chemistry the Department is in touch with the food manufacturers and preservers of the country, and through the Bureau of Markets it is in touch with the distribution of food products.

"By the coordination of all these agencies," said the Secretary, "and through the new ones which we hope to be able to establish, we expect to be in position to keep in close touch with the situation throughout the country all the time. We expect to be able to assist in stimulating the preservation of perishables, in case of difficulty in marketing them, and to assist also in the matter of transportation."

The "Food Control" Bill is the one which meets the most serious objections, because it proposes to confer upon the Government powers heretofore unheard of in this country. It seeks to establish a control of all necessaries, and it defines necessaries as practically everything that is edible and everything that enters into the production of anything edible. If it passes in substantially the form urged by the Government, the Administration will be equipped with the "Economic Policeman" mentioned by Secretary Houston, and will have the power and means of establishing an effective control of food production, distribution, and consumption in this country.

"There is not a power in either bill," said Mr. Houston, when he discussed them with me, "which the other belligerents have not in increased measure, or that will interfere with legitimate business. Nor is there any power in either bill not essential for national safety in the present crisis."

Save or Starve

AS THIS article is written, harvesting is under way in Texas and Oklahoma. By the time it is published the new wheat from Kansas will be coming forward.

The estimated total production of all cereals in 1917 for all the world, except Germany and her allies, is nearly 51,000,000

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tons less than the production for 1916 and is more than 19,000,000 tons below the annual average for the four-year period 1912-1916. The wheat crop of the non-Germanic world of this year is 12½ per cent. below average.

The time has gone by when any help could be given this situation by further increase of production. The time has come when the best possible use of what is produced must be made.

"The primary aim," says Herbert Hoover, "is to see that the people of this country eat a sufficient quantity of food, but not an excess, and *that they stop waste.*"

We waste food when we eat more than we need or more than is good for us. Many, if not most, of us waste food in this way every day.

We waste food when it is improperly prepared or cooked, when it is poorly seasoned, or burned or otherwise made unattractive to the eye or the palate.

We waste food when we have too much prepared or served for a meal; or when it is unnecessarily rich. This is a cardinal American means of waste.

We waste food when we do not insist on careful saving and repreparation of much that is left untouched at the table, too often permitting it to be thrown into the garbage pail.

Here is the chance to save with a definite purpose and for an object of supreme importance. To illustrate what saving can do, one of the means of saving recommended is the use of corn bread instead of all-wheat bread. A batch of corn bread for a family of five takes a cup and a half of white flour and a half a cup of corn-meal, instead of two cups of white flour. That saves only half a cup of white flour, and it might be regarded as an inconsequential saving. But consider that there are approximately twenty million families of five in the United States. If each one of them saved half a cup of white flour every day, there would be two and a half million pounds of white flour saved, or twelve thousand five hundred barrels of flour a day, or about 2,850,000 loaves of bread. With more corn-meal used in the bread the saving of white flour would be proportionately increased.

Suppose each one of the 20,000,000 families of the United States were to determine to do its bit by saving just one slice of white bread each day—that is, not actually to cut that slice and put it by to become dry and uneatable—but to reduce its bread consumption by one good slice a day, representing about three-quarters of an ounce of flour. That would be 15,000,000 ounces of flour or 937,500 pounds per day—about 4,750 barrels. The wheat in a barrel of flour averages four and one-half bushels, so that when 20,000,000 families in the United States save 20,000,000 slices of bread in a day they save about 21,500 bushels of wheat. At sixteen bushels per acre, which is a fair average for wheat production in the United States, that saving of a slice of bread per family per day saves the annual wheat production of 1350 acres. If that saving were kept up every day for a year by all the 20,000,000 families in the United States, it would add the wheat production of nearly 500,000 acres to send to our allies on the other side of the Atlantic.

Not every one can produce food. But almost every one can save some food, even a little, every day. And a hundred million littles put together make a mighty aggregate.

"Food first!" is our problem. Let everybody do his bit, and it will be well solved.

GOLD

BY KATHARINE PARK LEWIS

IN THE firelight she sits,
And, like a miser with his gold,
Upon her lap a gleaming hoard
She piles. Her hovering fingers hold
In soft caress the brimming heap;
Across her treasure firelight flits.
She leans above it as it grows.
Her eyes are like the far-off stars,
For, of the shining, even rows
A blanket for her unborn child
She knits.

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THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID

By John Breck

ILLUSTRATED BY RALPH BARTON

TO BEGIN with, Anson Phillips was tired. His body was tired from three successive nights like this—nights spent driving himself to hold an overbalanced ambulance in deep-cut, frozen ruts, along narrow roads that dropped off into nothing at the unguarded outer edge, or flattened down into sheets of ice-filmed water, through which his front wheels fumbled numbly. His mind was tired from the months-long accumulation of new experiences and sights and sounds which his previous life had utterly unfitted him to meet. And his spirit was weighted with the terrible humiliation of feeling that he was at the last bitter limit of his usefulness; that he was about to break under a load which those around him bore unflinchingly.

Not that it was in Anson Phillips to indulge self-pity; he felt only envy for those who were measuring up to his new-found ideals; self-loathing at his own falling short of them.

For he was on the verge of more than mere physical exhaustion. It was the sick revulsion of his spirit he feared—an utter inability to stand the strain of horror, and, beneath it all, a nauseating fear that strengthened as his physical endurance flagged. What he had to do, he kept telling himself, was to keep this car shuttling back and forth between the little bomb-proof at La Carrière, close up behind

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the lines, and the base hospital, seventeen miles away. He was a cog in the big machine that salvages human wreckage; if he broke he threw the whole local system out of gear, and now, of all times, it could least afford to have him break. For a sudden flurry in the storm of war had put its efficiency to the severest test.

The other fellows were sticking it out, he thought, Gordon, and McBlain, and Parmeter—good men and fit. And Curtis, Tommy Curtis, who still had a laugh left, Curtis whom he used to look down on in that far-away time at home in America—that was a bitter thing to remember. Curtis was showing him who was the unfit now. How near Curtis himself was to this same collapse he never guessed.

And so Phillips fretted against the curb of his weakness like a nervous horse frothing a sharp bit, and kept his nerves so keyed up that he could neither eat nor sleep in the time allotted him. His stomach felt inert at the sight of food; his slumbers were just long, fevered, fearsome drives among huge, unknown forms bearing down upon him through the dark.

He sneered at himself in the darkness for a silly fool as he slipped his chilled right hand from its glove to blow his nails. It had been spring when he enlisted here—easy work on smooth roads, with only moderate traffic to maneuver—his heart jumped as one of the fearsome monsters of his dreams roared at him. With a desperate twist he wrenched his ambulance out of the rut and made way for a great truck that loomed out of the darkness on his very fenders. He felt the grate as it scraped along his step, and his car rocked back after its passing.

He caught up his glove and wiped the sweat from his forehead with its knitted wrist before putting it on. The rim of his steel helmet struck cold against the back of his hand—that helmet which was the sign of dangers more unescapable than that which had just passed.

"Ah," breathed the *brancardier* on the seat beside him, "*qu' il fait froid.*" He huddled closer together. "*Voilà!*" he hissed before Phillips could answer him. Phillips braked, with his radiator four feet from the shadowy forms of marching men.

Words in the darkness, a command, the grinding of his gears on low as the car whimpered and choked getting under way, and he slipped past the detachment. Ahead was a big truck piled high with heavy steel rails—too big a load, he thought, for roads like these. Then ammunition wagons, big guns, tools, more men, more food—as his sickened nostrils distinguished from the mingled odors of steam and sweat and oil and gas. Over and over again he passed these things, and over and over he fell into their line to let things pass him coming back—wagons and trucks and horses jogging hurriedly along to get in another trip before dawn.

At one point he was stopped. He set his brake and walked forward to see what was the trouble ahead. Parmeter on a return trip had encountered a gun in a narrow piece of the road, and could not pass. He had a load. Phillips could hear the heavy breathing of a head wound; another man was delirious.

Presently the *poilus* came along; with many hands the ambulance was lifted by, and Phillips saw Parmeter, steady, immobile Parmeter, crank up and climb deliberately in. His own car had slid in the greasy mud, but some one had blocked his wheel. On the next slippery bank he chilled again at the realization of the slight grip which held his treads.

Down, down, he followed that winding road—a breathless second of suspense as he sought each turn, his hand on the steering-wheel tuned to every curve of the ruts which gave him his warning. At last his searching nostrils caught a stench, a welcome message, one which made him breathe more freely as it grew and then faded in the rear. Before his vision spread the plain, with wider roads and freer passages.

He remembered how it had looked last summer, when he passed through the gray of dawn on that morning of the first frost—a silver enchantment over everything. The trees had still held their golden leaves—fewer, as if more precious than the summer mass, and far off, against the red sun, a silhouette of six horses had dragged a gun up a hillcrest, their legs moving like a mechanical toy.

And he remembered when the nigh horse of that team which now lay just across the ditch had raced panic-stricken up the road, dragging the empty wagon and its dying mate until it locked wheels with a truck on the bottom of the grade and collapsed. They had lain there ever since they were rolled out of their harnesses, two

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QUITE AS THOUGH IT WERE A MATTER OF COURSE THEY SLIPPED THE STRETCHER UNDER POOR ÉTIENNE, HE AND ADOLPHE, AND LOADED HIM.

months, nearly three—they would be bad when summer came—but he would not know it then. Where would he be by spring? He could not tell, but he felt certain that it would not be here.

The future had not often seized upon

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Anson Phillips's mind. At home it was all settled and assured. He was a Phillips, and Phillipses had their especial duties foreordained, if nothing else. Here he had ceased to be a Phillips in trying to find himself as a man. This was no place for Phillipses, accustomed to being obeyed, here where it was obedience that was asked of men. Why, look at Tommy Curtis—and Curtis had been a man who took Anson's orders, who regarded Anson as immeasurably his superior. Superior——!

At home there had been many things a Phillips did not do; here a man was valued for his versatility. He felt a warm impulse of comradeship for his *brancardier* beside him; a good boy, this stolid little Frenchman, and they had seen a lot of service together. But he pictured his mother's horror if ever he should bring Adolphe, redolent always of his favorite indulgences of tobacco and onion soup, into the chaste precincts of their home. And yet—the wave of disgust swept over him again—when it came to service, even Adolphe was the better man; could stand more strain.

He could see only dimly. It was his ears and his nose that guided him, and memory that ticked off each hole and bump he passed and listed those to come. Try as he would to keep it full of other sights, of scenes from plays, of books, of pictures, of the joy of sailing, and boats on broad expanses (a favorite dream along the jammed hillroad), one picture seized his imagination and kept it spellbound.

It was Charlotte's face, lit with the spirit which had sent him here.

Her blue eyes were bright—he tried to make them look tenderly on him as once he had hoped they might; but they were hard. And her mouth, which he wanted to see smile, was sorrowful. Charlotte pitied those who fail, but she had no room for them in her life. And Charlotte's whole interest was bound up in this work.

It was Charlotte and her friends who had organized to send Tommy Curtis here, long before Phillips came, and Tommy was a credit to them. Anson had been able to hold himself to the same service until now—his hand rested nervelessly on the wheel; he was done. He was just going through the motions of his work, waiting for—what? He did not know nor care, but he knew that of this running through the perilous dark there must somewhere be an end. Not just turning around and running back again, but a definite stop. He was too sleepy to think more than this.

He braked again behind a confused babel of voices. As he skirted the sound a rocket lit the scene. A big truckload of those rails he had been passing was mired in the ditch at the turn; it had run off the road in the dark. Just through the patch of woods the artillery were taking their stand. The teams were dragging the rails over to their places one by one. Sometimes they hit each other in the dark, with an echoing crash, or struck a tree with a dull roar. Anson heard one sound exactly like their dinner-gong at home; he was scarcely sure whether he was not at home, dreaming all this.

Suddenly the car dipped; he came to with a start. He had driven into a shell-hole, new since the last time he crossed there; so new it had not yet filled with water. His wheels refused to grip on the crumbling clay of its sides. Adolphe ran back, and some of the *poilus* came and shouldered the car out on to the clear road again. There were two blinding flashes and two shells landed not far away.

"They're getting the range on that work all right," he told himself.

Then the whine of a bullet startled him, so close it came. He heard it strike—or was that something else that dropped? A cry of pain rose from the little group who had just been helping him. "What's the matter?" he called.

"*C'est Étienne,*" answered some one. He made that out among the broken ejaculations he could scarcely separate into meaning.

"Bring him here," he ordered, going back to open the ambulance door.

Quite as though it were a matter of course, they slipped the stretcher under poor Étienne, he and Adolphe, and loaded him. He was bleeding fast; Anson's hands were slippery on his crank, and the smell of blood tingled through him. As he started up, another shell came over, closer than the last. Then came more rockets. Leaning out, his foot not yet releasing into high speed, he took in every detail of the road and of the field beyond. Across in front of Adolphe he could count the shell-holes with dry bottoms, holes made to-night. And as he went into high, again that dreadful bullet whined by, just above his head. Listening, he concluded it was striking just about where it had before—it was set to that range.

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How he finished that run he never knew. His hand still managed to perform its duty, but his brain echoed to the shells which broke about him with inconceivable rapidity, and the rifle which he knew must be set in a certain shell-hole, half a mile away, hummed in his ears like an angry bee.

Again the guns rang out with the reassuring sharpness of reality, cleaving his fancies into shadowy atoms that danced and reeled before his eyes. With the sudden revulsion that followed, he found himself whirring through a breathless silence, insulated equally from the clamor he had come through and from the normal life he hungered for. He was *Tomlinson*, the impotent, in the void between heaven and hell. And his very flesh shrank from the weak cowardice that could make a man into the cringing thing he knew himself to be.

ONE PICTURE SEIZED HIS IMAGINATION AND KEPT IT SPELLBOUND.

It was Adolphe who brought him to himself. For a moment past Adolphe's voice had been making a futile noise that did not reach his mind. Now he pinched Anson's arm impatiently, and Anson stopped; the run was over. He started back to help take out his *blessé;* other figures were there and Adolphe was talking, but nothing was real except Adolphe and the wounded man, and perhaps the bomb-proof, with light streaming from its open door.

Some one shouldered him back, and then a hand took his elbow and guided him into the light and warmth — also into the terrible smell of that corrugated steel cabin. It had been ankle deep with dressings and worse the last time he saw it; now his vision mercifully failed to discriminate form in the rusty blotches beside the operating-table, yet he groped desperately for the door. Again the hand took him and pushed him down. He knew it was on the wooden bench outside the hut. With a sigh he stretched himself out. He had a comforting sense of human presence near him.

"Good Lord!" said a voice in his ear. "Did you see his eyes?—all bloodshot!"

"Just lack of sleep," said another, matter-of-factly. "Old Anse always was geared up a bit too high."

"Well, he's pounding his ear for fair, now," resumed the other voice. "Adolphe says he's been asleep at the wheel."

"Shouldn't wonder." This was Tommy Curtis's voice. What a nice voice Tommy had—curious he'd never realized until lately what a fine chap Tommy was. "I don't see how he's managed the way he has. Why, I'd be willing to bet he never even ran the water for his own bath before he came out here. He had it all to learn." Some one put something warm over Anson's feet, and he knew no more.

But the voices kept on. McBlain's curiosity had been aroused. "Why the deuce do you suppose he ever came? There are only three reasons for doing it: Either you're conscious of your debt to humanity —and that's not Phillips; all he seemed to know was humanity's debt to him. At first he used to carry no end of side—" reminiscently—"but we took that out of him. Or else he's looking for glory—and Phillips is just about as obtrusive as a caterpillar; wouldn't know what to do with it if he did get it. That's the funny part of his vanity —he's so conceitedly reticent. Or else a fellow comes, like you did, to get a little excitement and see the world. Well, that chap must have traveled about everywhere there is to go; he's rich, isn't he?"

"Sure," answered Tommy cheerfully. "He owns the town back home. Either

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you get out and hustle elsewhere, or you become one of Anse's hired men. That was me. I can't imagine why he's here. He must have done a right-about after I left." He was silent for a moment, turning something over in his mind. Then he demanded suddenly: "What have you got against him, anyway?"

"His looks, I guess," McBlain drawled carelessly. "Those glasses with tortoise-shell rims and his superior air, and the way he makes such a fuss over himself—his shaving, for instance—he makes a regular fetish-worship out of it. I grant you, what we get out of our radiators is the only hot water in Alsace, but some of us stand it being prickly. And when he found he had lice! And he fainted the first time he saw his load put in"—grinning. "He used to travel around with smelling-salts in one pocket and bug-powder in the other, and he'd get up in the night to chase it if he found one of the bally things in his bed."

"Ammonia, not smelling-salts," corrected Curtis. "And his first man was enough to make anybody sick—his face was mostly gone. We keep our doors shut so the soldiers won't see the messes we're carrying, and they're no delicate blossoms. I don't mind telling you that some sights have turned my stomach."

"Mine, too," owned McBlain honestly.

"Well," Curtis continued, "Anse's not used to touching his own dirty linen, let alone such things as he's handled here. And don't you see that fussiness about himself is all one piece with the way he tinkers up his car? He has less repairs than any one on this section, and she's always ready to roll. I don't know why he came, but he worked on this run with me all winter, and he's surely made good so far. You get to know a fellow when all the work lies just between you two."

"He's all shot now," said McBlain, going over to peer at the chauffeur. "He'll never run out of here again to-night. S'pose I'd better take him along to get him out of the way, and send some one after the car? My load's almost in."

"No, I don't. Let him sleep. I'll take him, if he has got to go that way, but he'd be terribly humiliated. He's done too much. Why, that boy's been running on his nerve since yesterday! You've no idea the fight he's been putting up. I want to see him save his face if he anyway can."

Tommy pulled the sheepskin he had taken from his shoulders tighter about Phillips's feet, with a sort of defiance in his care.

"I didn't use to like him myself," he owned. "He's not a taking sort; but you see things differently out here. It gives you a detached view of things. People are so much what their background makes them. They have to be to stay in the picture, sort of. If Anse can stick in service long enough to get into the picture here, I sort of think he'll belong like the rest of us. Only I wish you fellows would give him a fair chance."

McBlain seemed sobered. "You're a queer duck, Tommy. You talk like a woman sometimes—but I guess we've been something less than open-minded toward him," he said. Then his voice grew graver. "It's a bit late to think about it now. Do you know, I dread trying that road of yours again? It's not—nice. There are three of us here, and the chances of our all getting out aren't three to one, according to my betting instinct."

"Sure they are," insisted Curtis. "The Boches aren't going at us very hot. They do things so systematically it's a great help. Four guns is all they're giving to a volley, and you can time them. They're 'most always the same number of minutes apart. Just sneak up as short as you dare and wait till the volley's done, and then make a break for it. It would be easier if there weren't so many rockets—that's because those artillerymen are making a racket, and the Boches want to see what's going on."

"Well," McBlain insisted, "there's trouble brewing. I feel it. My barometer has dropped pretty low out here. I'm not afraid, you know"—he was defiant again, "but it seems to me you've got to hold all the cards you can. I'm going to talk to Phillips and see." He shook Anson by the shoulder as he spoke, before Curtis could interpose. "Phillips," he called, "Phillips, how was the road?"

The sleeper barely stirred. Again McBlain shook him. "Three minutes," murmured Curtis, as a fresh volley began. "Let him be, Mac." But the sound had reached Phillips's half-awakened ear. Catching his breath, he started up, groping, hunting instinctively for shelter, panic-stricken as some delirium-tremens victim, and as unreasoning.

Curtis seized him. "All right," he shouted. "You're all right, my giddy sleep-walker.

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They aren't giving us any attention at all. The valley's as close as they come."

They put him down again, this time between them, and slowly he regained his reason. "Adolphe?" he asked plaintively, as his mind groped through the mists of his exhaustion. "Don't let me do that again. Jab me with your knife if I start to doze. Make me keep awake; we'll hit something, sure." Curtis slipped an arm out to steady him, and he winced, as from an unexpected thrust.

"No, not yet," he protested. "I'm all— Oh, where's Adolphe?"

"The road," persisted McBlain; "they're shelling it. How is it? I'm going out again. Do you understand?"

"Oh, the road!" Before Anson Phillips's eyes spread the last picture they had taken in. He saw the shell-pitted plain, the turn of the road, the tipped truck, with the figures moving about it, as clearly as though it were flashed on a movie screen. And, as though he were interpreting to a child who

EVEN AS THEY SPOKE, THE SURGEON APPEARED IN THE DOORWAY.

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could not understand the significance of it, he spoke. "You see, they have the set-rifle right in the middle of that big shell-hole—that's where the *poilu* was hit—so you don't want to get in line with it. Anyway, the rail-truck may spill any moment and close the road entirely. But we used to take a short cut in the summer, right across the field. You get over the ditch on the old driveway to that ruined house, and keep to the right, past the splintered tree. It'll carry a machine until the sod's cut up. It's old pasture-land."

"Great head!" approved Curtis. "That's the dope. You'll only have to chance splinters that far out. Look, Mac"—as the rockets burst out again—"see where he means? Run up close and you can pick your way while you wait for a volley."

"Sure," Mac nodded sturdily. Then a thought struck him. "Did you load that *blessé* down in that road?" he demanded.

"He got hurt lifting us out," Phillips explained quite simply. "I couldn't leave him there, could I?"

"You should have. That was under fire!" Mac accused. "You bally fool! Don't you know you're a non-combatant, and entitled to look after your own hide? Didn't you ever think that every man of ours killed makes it so much harder for those who want to enlist? And it's men we need—men! Get that through your nut. And we don't want to lose any, either!"

"I didn't think," Phillips apologized. "But I don't think I could have helped it, even then. I couldn't think of that chap being left there to die. It seems as if the more I see destroyed, the more a live man means to me. I can't think of them as just a mass, any more."

"Well, you're a silly ass, anyway," McBlain returned, feeling vainly for a more trenchant bit of comment to cover up the novelty of his present emotion. But his hand caught Phillips's in a contradictory grasp that ran like tonic through the tired man's veins. "A perfect pair of old grannies, you two," he flung at Curtis, with a pat on Phillips's shoulder, and was gone.

"Lie down again," Tommy urged as the sound of his wheels died away.

Anson obeyed. But he was all tense again. His mind was flashing. Now it was with McBlain along the road, now it was at home, with the girl who meant so much to him, and, perhaps, to his comrade here. "I wonder if they know, back home, what it's like, sometimes?" he speculated.

"Sure they don't," Tommy answered him cheerfully. "But that needn't make any difference to us. And I wouldn't like to think of any one lying awake nights thinking of me."

"Not even Charlotte?"

Tommy shook his head. "She least of all. She'd feel responsible. And I don't mind telling you she is."

Anson nodded understandingly. "Me, too." Then he added, half to himself: "But she doesn't know it. Now I'm glad of that." He thought for a moment more. "Tommy, I used to be jealous of you. I couldn't see why you took with people so. Now I understand—I wrote that to Charlotte. I wanted her to know."

"I'm just plain he-man, like a lot more," said Tommy, then, to get away from his embarrassment, "There go the guns. Mac'll be making his run after this." He stepped away from the bench to where he could get a view.

"Good old McBlain." Phillips raised himself to watch. "He doesn't mean half what he says. I'm just beginning to know him, too." With an effort, he got to his feet.

"There he goes! There he goes! My God, he's in a hole!"

"A hole—and no one near to help! I sent him there—I sent him," moaned Phillips.

"Gas—give her the gas! Take it on low!" Curtis advised tensely, as if he, too, were in the distant car.

"He's moving, moving!" Phillips choked, grasping Curtis by the arm. Then the rockets faded, and the two stood gripping each other in the dark.

"He said our chances were less than three to one," breathed Curtis in an awed voice. "There come the shells."

"I can't see," Phillips strained into the darkness between flashes. "My eyes just burn and blur."

"He's gone," Tommy announced gently. "Poor old Mac. He saw it coming." Then, as another rocket burst: "No—there, there he is, skipping along the rise, away up the road, clean out of range! He's safe, Anse! Mac's by! Why, Anse—" Anson Phillips had broken into hysteric sobs.

As they still stood there, a terrific clamor made them start.

"They've got the truck." The perception

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of Anson Phillips's mind was keener than Curtis's sight. For a moment they stood listening to the vicious crashes of the gun which had found its mark, and the others that were feeling for the same range. Even the monotonous whine of the rifle seemed to take on a surer note.

"Think how the splinters and shrapnel will be flying," said Phillips, with a shudder. "That's the two hundred and ten, the one that wrecked the road."

"No crossing there, for another hour," Curtis rejoined. "Well, there won't be another trip for a while. They're short of a load."

"ANSE, ANSE, WAIT!" HE SHOUTED, BELTING HIMSELF WITH CLUMSY FINGERS AS HE RAN.

Even as he spoke, the surgeon appeared in the doorway, his array of safety-pins glistening in the light on his coat-front. His scissors, for cutting away the clothing from about a wound, were thrust through a pin. They were far from bright. He held his hands as if they were wet, a habit characteristic of his work—one which shocks the unprofessional beholder with the sense that those hands are shrinking from what lies beneath them.

"Monsieur Curtis. We will not await more wounded. It is necessary that this man here go to the hospital at once." His voice rang out like a death-sentence.

"*Eh bien, monsieur.* I'll hurry," Tommy answered, as cheerfully as if it were the merest favor that had been asked of him. "Well, so long, Anse. I guess I'm elected. Let's hope the Boches will be tired of their new play-toy by the time I come along. Bet there's mighty little left of it. That means one more piece of fast freight to be dodged to-morrow night. Such is the life." He was talking to keep up his courage.

But Anson, out of his own deadly earnest, could not see this. That Tommy Curtis, who had suffered so keenly for McBlain's danger only a few moments before, could face his own with a jest seemed unbelievably heroic. He was a man. And perhaps

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in a few brief moments more, he would be a moaning, bleeding thing like that whose blood still stained his own hands. Again, in remembrance, his hands were warm and slippery—only this time it was Tommy Curtis he would be bringing in.

For he knew that even his own fear could not hold him if the rockets showed him Tommy's need. Had not Curtis tended him? And was not Curtis worth more than whole regiments of Étiennes? Worth more than he himself—he who was about to fail, who knew himself already spent?

"Anse," came Curtis's voice, quite matter-of-fact—it cost some little effort to keep it so, but old Anse would have a bitter time alone, after he had gone. He wished he'd listened to Mac and sent him along. "Will you look up my *brancardier?*—I'll start the car. Wherever did my sheepskin get to? I laid it over you." He went to where the two ambulances stood side by side, and began to crank his own.

As he rose to run the errand, Anson Phillips stumbled on the lost coat—two skins, so fastened that one thrust one's head through the center and belted in the long ends before and behind. Fresh emotion stirred him—Curtis had felt the bite of that damp wind so that *he* might be warm. And what had he done for Curtis?

He remembered a scene out of the blind past, long ago—it had happened when Curtis had first thrown up a job in one of his offices to come here. So long ago it was, that it scarcely mattered now — eons had passed since then. He wondered how such a twist ever got into that unreasoning world they two had left behind, that he should have held authority over his betters. It was part of Tommy's bigness, to have forgotten the incident. But Phillips could not forget.

Clutching the sheepskin close, he sought the little door behind which Adolphe and Tommy's Alsatian defied the stench with stifling clouds of tobacco smoke.

There was no plan in his mind; things just happened. Impulse guided him to what his reason would have refused. When he called his indiscriminate order, "*Allons, nous irons*," he scarcely realized why Adolphe, too, responded to the word. It was the Alsatian's turn—Adolphe should have known that. And yet afterward he knew that it was Adolphe he wanted, though he still lacked the courage to face the decision his inmost soul had accepted.

Back beside the ambulances he heard the motor whirr; Curtis was tuning it, listening anxiously for a false note—it might be that he would need every ounce of power. Anson waited patiently for Tommy to turn —before this parting he must shrive his soul.

"Thanks," called Curtis over the hum, as he saw his helper follow Phillips to attend to tucking in his load. "My coat, too? You're the stuff." He held out a hand.

"Wait—I want to tell you"—Anson clung to the garment as though fearing to miss his chance of speech in the other's eagerness to be gone. "You know when I said you were going gallivanting where you'd no business to be?"

"You mean you said I needn't come back if I left?"

"Yes. Well, I take it back—took it back long ago, of course, though I didn't say so. Of course you can have anything I have to offer when this is through. I was——"

"You weren't the man you are now, that's all. Thank you for saying it, though."

"I wanted to apologize—" Anson felt blindly for some way to fill this need of abasing himself—express this strange new self-abnegation which was moving him.

"You needn't, Anse. It was perfectly natural — I understand." Curtis's hand was vibrant with a curious tenderness. In the last few weeks he had been seeing the rebirth of Anson Phillips—he felt like a nurse who dreads to leave her charge before he is ready to walk alone. Anson was such a solitary mortal—every one else seemed to conspire toward shutting him still more within himself. For this, among the many reasons that kept crowding into his mind, Tommy Curtis awfully wanted to live. Wanted it so much that he had to shut his ears to those clattering crashes he must try to pass.

For a second time that night a touch put new life into the spent body of Anson Phillips. Only the clasp of a hand when Tommy took his coat—but it gave him the power to realize his dim resolution.

From the doorway of the bomb-proof, where Curtis had taken the woolly thing to shake it out and put it on, he heard the noise of his motor change to the harsh protest of reverse; as he raised his head it changed again, to low speed. Some intuition warned him. "Anse, Anse, wait!" he shouted, belting himself with clumsy fingers as he ran.

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But the car had settled into high speed, away down the road. His Alsatian was blinking stupidly after it. "He is mad," he volunteered. Curtis understood what sort of madness it was.

Adolphe, too, thought his driver mad—a man who hustled one suddenly into another man's ambulance and sneaked off like a thief while his back was turned. He drove like a madman, though with a genius for sparing his load, every nerve tense to speed or check, as the need came, on those well-known tracks. But mad or not, Phillips was Adolphe's man; Adolphe belonged there on the seat beside him, and he felt that he belonged.

Anson ran into the reverberation without a tremor. He was going to die—very probably; but he was giving his own chances of a safe run after the firing died to the man who was worth saving. He was scrapping a worn tool to save a fine one. He was perfectly certain of the right of his course. He was bargaining with the fates for Tommy's privilege to live, and to enjoy everything that life held for the fit.

By a shell-flash he found the culvert into the field. He felt McBlain's wheel-tracks and swung hard over, his whole attention concentrated on the effort to avoid the same mischance. Once a front wheel dipped slightly and he veered off; the rear wheel followed on to solid ground. A dead branch cracked beneath him; Étienne moaned; the man below Étienne, less painfully hurt, murmured encouragingly. And these were absolutely all the sounds he heard.

In numb suspense he awaited the outburst. He even suspected that it was really there but not recording in his ears. Then he realized that there were no more flashes.

His drive wheels spun on a wet spot; Adolphe started to step down, but the wheels gripped again.

Anson began to think. This must be like that loss of all time when his life passes before a drowning man in one interminable. flash. His mistakes stood out clear—multitudinous they were; but defined against all the rest stood the regret that he had not thought to provide for Tommy's future. Such a little thing it would have been to assign him to a permanent place where he could afford to marry—Charlotte, of course. (There was no bitterness in this thought, for he had renounced all hope of her.) He blamed himself bitterly for his selfish thoughtlessness.

Charlotte's face flashed before him, sad, as it would be when she heard of his end—for undoubtedly any second this suspense would be over and the guns would crash out again.

Then a rocket went up. He found himself near the splintered tree — in ground pitted and spread with splinters. The light faded—still no sound. Cautiously he made the crossing into the road again—still that interminable silence.

As the tension grew on him, the road began to clog with phantoms; his wheels once more were in the ruts, and he drove crashing madly through the shadows, flinching from each expected impact, further unstrung by each hit that he failed to feel.

Now he was past the dead team, his wheels feeling the rise. Now he had reached the first turn of the ascent. Then at last came the sound—the deafening crash. And then his reason woke. The Boches had shifted their range! They were training their volley on new ground, the hillside beyond the wood.

And he was alive! Somehow he felt it would have been easier to die. Life held so many problems, and he felt almost too tired to face them. He had steeled himself to meet death, and he had shattered—fear.

The man who ran that ambulance to the hospital door, his inert muscles barely able to guide it, was a shadow, worn bone-thin by exhaustion, his bloodshot eyes gleaming from the darkened ridges of his cheekbones, his face cut deep with experience. But from the burnt-out fires of his vitality had arisen, full-fledged, his spirit. His whole bearing was that of a man at peace with himself and unafraid.

A new serial—"Judith of Blue Lake Ranch," by Jackson Gregory—begins in the October number. It is the story of a girl who tackles a man's job in a rough country—a story of the West's Big Outdoors, full of adventnre and tension.

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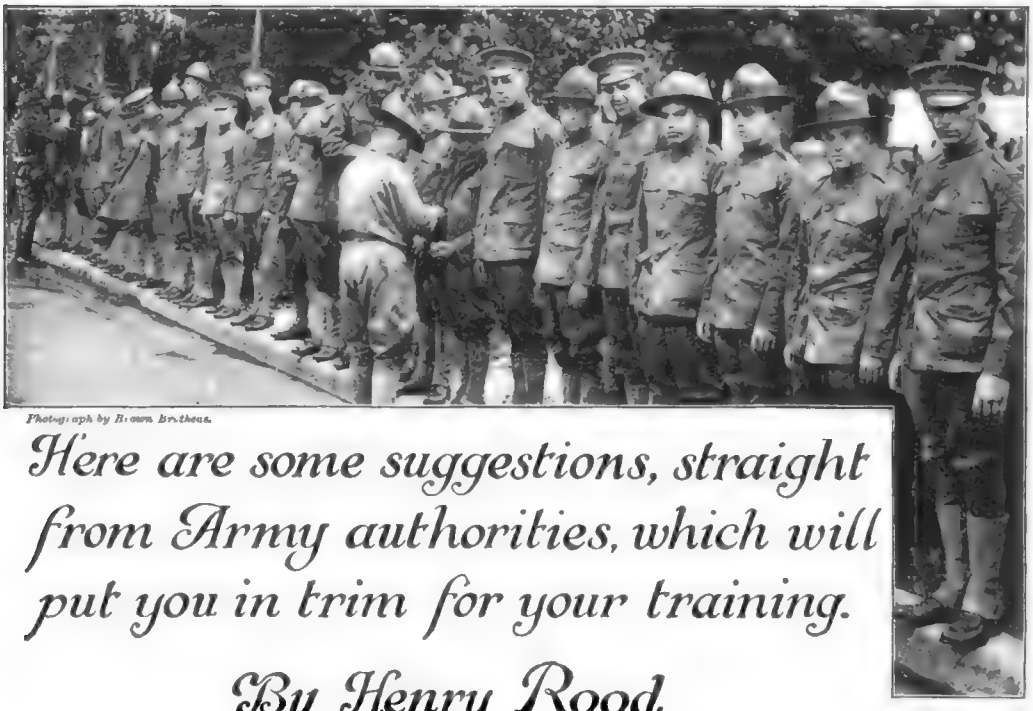
IF YOU ARE CALLED TO THE COLORS—



Photograph by Brown Brothers

Here are some suggestions, straight from Army authorities, which will put you in trim for your training.

By Henry Rood

YOU are called to the colors.

You have been chosen by selective process as a soldier of the new National Army. You have passed a physical examination and have been pronounced fit for the strenuous, exacting, grim business of war. You have been ordered to report at a mobilization camp, there to learn the rudiments of the soldier's trade.

But ever since you left school you have been engaged in some civil occupation. You know nothing of army life or discipline. You are wondering what is going to happen, and how hard it will be to get broken in to new surroundings, new duties.

This article is written for the purpose of giving you some practical hints which should make less sharp and less difficult the sudden break from civil life to army life. If you consider these hints carefully, and try to follow them out, you may be saved discomfort later on. There is not much time between now and the date when you are due at your training-camp, but sufficient time, for you to put in practise some of the suggestions here given.

First of all, lose no time in calling on a skilled, experienced dentist. Have him go over your teeth carefully, looking after every spot that needs attention, including any bit of root that may remain in the jaw from a tooth extracted previously. If you fail to look after your teeth now, you may be sorry later on. By all means have the dentist go carefully over your gums to see if any sign exists in them of trouble which you would not detect yourself. This fixing up of your teeth should cost little, or nothing, excepting possibly for materials used. All over the country patriotic dentists are doing such work for recruits without a cent of

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POST-EXCHANGE, THE HAUNT OF LOLLYPOP, LADY NICOTINE AND OTHER RARE TREATS.

expense—as part of their service to the flag.

Go to a first-class dentist—and go to-day.

The second suggestion is that you commence now to look after your feet. You haven't any real trouble with them or you would not have passed your preliminary physical examination, for good, walkable feet form one of the first considerations for the soldier. But in the course of a short time you may do much to strengthen your feet. Bathe them once a day. Do not use hot water or warm water. Use cool water. Do not use soap; you will not need it, and some kinds of soap do more harm than good to the skin of the foot. Cut your toe nails straight across, and keep them cut straight across. This, more than anything else, will prevent ingrowing nails.

If you are proud of your feet and wear short, or narrow, or pointed shoes, take them off at once and fire them into the furthest corner of a closet. If you can afford to do so, buy a pair of shoes made on the Munson last—label stamped on the sole; shoes that have a straight inner edge, that are broad and comfortable. Get them a size longer and a size wider than you have generally worn; your feet will spread as soon as you commence hard work in camp.

If there is an army and navy supply store in your town, ask for medium-weight army shoes for the enlisted man. If you buy shoes at an ordinary store, insist on having them large enough. The average civilian salesman of shoes may try to sell you something "just as good," or to fit you with army shoes that are too small in order "to make a nice, natty appearance." Don't let him fool you; get what you want, or don't get any.

At the time of writing this article, a good pair of army shoes, Munson last, costs from six dollars to six dollars and twenty-five cents in the average retail store, whereas the army itself issues them to the enlisted man for four dollars and seventy-three cents. It is not necessary to buy shoes in advance, for they will be issued to you when you get to camp; but if you need shoes between now and then, or if you can afford to do so anyhow, buy the army kind now, and get accustomed to them.

If you have been engaged in work which has prevented much exercise, start without delay each day or each evening for a brisk tramp—two miles, three miles, four miles; as much as you can do without becoming fatigued. And keep this up regularly.

Few Americans know how to walk. When you get into the army it will take an experienced officer just about two hours to

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Photograph by Brown Bros.

THE ROOKIE SHEDS HIS PEACE PLUMAGE AND GETS INTO KHAKI FOR THE FIRST TIME.

teach you how to plant your feet on the ground properly, and how to step. But you can strengthen your feet a lot before being ordered to camp, if you take the trouble.

Up to the present time the army has prescribed a position of "attention" and a marching step in which the toes are somewhat turned outward; and there is no present indication that this will be changed in the immediate future. Yet this posture of the feet is unnatural to the human animal, and some high officers believe it to be wholly wrong in practise. These men say that the toes should be pointed straight ahead, and not turned out at an angle at all. When taking your practise walks to strengthen your feet before going to camp, try walking with your toes straight ahead, as an Indian walks in his moccasins. Later on, of course, in the army, you will stand at attention and march as directed.

Again, for strengthening the feet, stand in underwear—no shoes—with your toes pointed toward each other, in pigeon-toed fashion. Throw out your chest to its normal dimensions. Raise yourself slowly on your toes, and then slowly let yourself down. Try not to swing your body forward as you do this; if possible have a straight up-and-down motion. When the muscles in the calves of the legs begin to ache, stop for a time.

Once more: stand with feet about six inches apart, toes pointing straight ahead of you. You are resting your weight practically on the entire feet from toes to heels. Now, rest your weight on the outside edges of both feet at the same time; then come back to resting them on the entire feet. Throw the weight again on the outside edges, then back on the full foot. Do this a dozen or twenty times a day, oftener if you think of it and have the chance, even if you are wearing shoes.

From time to time during the day, rest your full weight on one foot, then on the other—being careful to have the weight rest on the outer edges of the foot. When you do this you will feel that edge and all the toes gripping the sole of your shoe; they will have to if you preserve your balance. Try this exercise frequently. It is not

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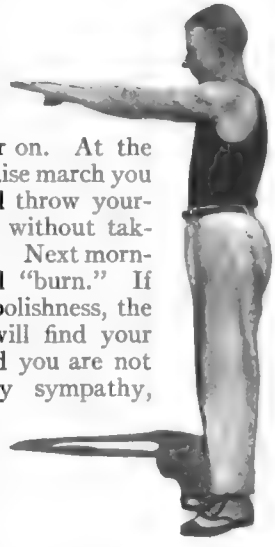
necessary to raise far from the ground the foot which is at ease—just far enough to let the weight come on the outside edge of the other foot. A simple and effective exercise. Nobody will notice your doing it, and, anyhow, it's nobody's affair but yours.

From the day you enter the army, make it a rule never under any circumstances to sleep in your shoes. Recruits sometimes do—and are sorry later on. At the end of a long practise march you may feel tired and throw yourself down to sleep without taking off your shoes. Next morning your feet will "burn." If you repeat this foolishness, the second morning will find your feet blistered—and you are not likely to get any sympathy, either.



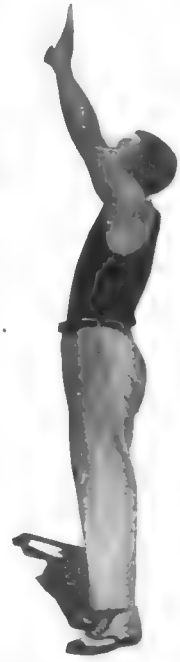
Do not wear the same sock on the same foot two days in succession. To-day wear on your right foot the sock you wore on your left foot yesterday. If you now are wearing socks that have holes in them or that have been darned, so they are at all rough in spots, throw them aside. At present prices you should be able to get good, serviceable socks at the army camps for fifteen cents a pair. Like other garments, as will be explained further on, they will form part of your clothing allowance provided by the Government.

These details may not seem to be important, but they are. A soldier is as good as his teeth, stomach, feet; but no better.

To do your work in the army you will have to be supple as well as muscular. Too many civilians of military age are not supple. When you first arise in the morning, and again just before going to bed, take ten or fifteen minutes for simple setting-up exercises. Go through these preferably in your underclothes; wear stockings if you choose, but it is well not to wear shoes at first.

Stand erect, chest thrown out, hands hanging naturally at sides, feet planted firmly on floor, about six inches apart. Raise both hands as high as you can, locking thumbs overhead. Lean your head backward until you can see your finger-nails. *Keep your eyes on those finger-nails all the time.* Now bend forward—knees absolutely rigid—until your hands touch the floor in front of you, and slowly come back to the original position, with hands raised high above your head, not bending your knees in the slightest, and with eyes on your finger-nails from start to finish.

Do this several times each morning and each evening—and in between if you have opportunity. Gradually increase the number of such exercises, and see how quickly and how naturally you commence to loosen up as well as straighten up.



These are just a few preliminary hints. You will get plenty more as soon as you start in at camp. But if you carry out these beforehand, they may aid materially in strengthening your feet and in commencing to make you supple and erect. If this first setting-up exercise seems somewhat difficult at first, owing to stiffness of muscles or too much fat, do not be discouraged. You will soon get used to it, and once in the army you'll have to—and you'll have a lot in addition.

Photographs by Brown Brothers.

The chances are that in your home you consume a great deal more in the way of sweets than you are likely to have in the army. If so, commence now to cut down on the sugar you use. This applies also to excessive use of butter. It is not at all impossible that for days at a stretch you will have no sugar for coffee, no milk for oatmeal, and butter only once a day for your bread. In

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the fighting front of Europe you won't be able to have all the sugar and butter and cakes and pies that you have at home. It will be necessary, in your training-camp, to accustom yourself to do without such things. It is all part of your preparation for the future—all for your own good.

In this connection, do not be apprehensive for a moment as to whether you will get enough food in the army camp—and don't let the womenfolks of your family have the slightest anxiety as to this. You may not get as lavish a supply of food, or food in as great variety, as at home; but you most assuredly will get all the food you need to keep you in the very best physical condition possible. You will be in the charge of experienced army officers who know their business; and perhaps the most important job they have is to keep their men in good health and in good spirits. Otherwise the men are worth little as soldiers.

NEVERTHELESS, for your own comfort it would be well to commence now, before going to camp, to accustom yourself to plain, substantial fare. I have seen a body of five thousand men working for twelve or fourteen hours on a day when their heartiest meal, their dinner, consisted of bean soup and stewed tomatoes, a cup of coffee, and all the bread they could eat. These troops had no complaint to make, either, and they were in splendid physical condition—hard as nails, supple as athletes, full of fun and snap, eager to go ahead with their job and finish it in the best possible manner.

In the training-camp to which you are sent you may find a restaurant or lunch-room where you can purchase food if you want to. At any rate, you will find a store, a post-exchange, where you can buy candy, sweet chocolate, pies, cakes, ice-cream cones, etc., in addition to a large variety of articles that are not "eats." Recruits are liberal purchasers of sweets at first, although they do not really need to spend money in this way. But the sudden break from the home table, with superabundance of sweets, to army fare, frequently comes with a pretty hard jolt. So if you are a wise lad you'll commence now to cut down on unnecessary dainties, instead of depending on the camp candy-store.

While on this subject of sweets, a word is advisable to the man who has been in the habit of using beer, ale, or other alcoholic beverage in his life as civilian. Under the law approved May 18th, 1917 (Section XII), the sale of any intoxicating liquor, including beer, ale, or wine, is forbidden to any officer or member of the military forces of the United States while in uniform. And from the time you are called to camp until mustered out at the end of the war, you will be in uniform. Furthermore, the army has means of identifying those who violate this law, either openly or by smuggling "wet goods" to men. A saloon-keeper is not likely to sell a soldier a glass of beer for five cents when he knows that by doing so he faces a fine of one thousand dollars and imprisonment for twelve months, or both penalties. It wouldn't be profitable for the saloon-keeper, or for his bartender—for the law of May 18th is so worded as to nail them both at the same time.

This particular law does not impose any new penalties on the soldier who buys and consumes a drink. It strikes at the root of the matter by punishing the sale itself so hard that few dealers would care to take the risk involved. As for the soldier, it must be remembered that army regulations amply cover his end of the matter. In times of peace, if he is found intoxicated *when off duty* he is extremely likely to be fined fifteen days' pay—to have to work for Uncle Sam as hard as possible for two weeks, and then hand over his wages to the Government. In times of peace, also, a soldier tried and convicted of being drunk *when on duty* may be imprisoned at hard labor for six months, and fined two-thirds of his pay for that period. In times of war, intoxication brings severe punishment.

Therefore it is that the man who drinks moderately in civilian life may find it a hardship, at first, when his usual beer or ale or other alcoholic beverage is suddenly and automatically shut off. If you happen to be such a man, commence now, at once, by cutting out beer or wine or whatever you are in the habit of drinking. You might as well get over the hardship before you go to camp as afterward, when you will have a good many other new things to put up with. Probably you will turn to sugar in some form, like sweet chocolate, to relieve the desire for alcoholic stimulant. Many soldiers have done so, and are doing so to-day, and that is one reason why certain post-exchanges sell enormous quantities of candy and other sweets. Army life

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is not what it used to be in Civil War days, or much later, so far as liquor is concerned. In fact, those who go into the United States Army under present conditions are not nearly so likely to become drinking men as if they remained in civil life.

In former times it used to be said that "drink had the army"—not merely our army, but almost every army. Nowadays, however, the army has drink by the scruff of the neck and on the run. This perhaps is the most notable step forward in the development of Uncle Sam's fighting forces. Only one other step of anything like the same importance remains to be taken—that of protecting the soldier from vice, and this is largely a matter of educating the men to realize that they must avoid such pestilence as they avoid cholera or smallpox. One is not more dangerous than the other.

Photographs by Brown Brothers.
TRY THIS OVER ON YOUR FEET EVERY DAY, TILL THEY'RE IN PERFECT TUNE.

YOU may want to know what to take with you when you start for your mobilization camp. It isn't absolutely necessary for you to take anything excepting the clothes on your back, for when you are mustered in, the Government gives you a clothing allowance of forty-three dollars and five cents at the very beginning, and allows you to draw additional clothing at the rate of two dollars and seven cents per month. You do not get the money; but you are allowed to draw clothing costing up to that sum. This, of course, is not deducted from your pay of thirty dollars per month.

In this way you may obtain service hat and cord, khaki uniform, including overcoat and poncho and shoes, socks, underwear, and a recruit's toilet kit, containing razor, shaving-brush, hair-brush, comb, shoe-brush, tooth-brush, one housewife, two towels, one package of shoe polish, one cake of soap.

If you have the underwear, toilet articles, etc., on hand, you could take them with you to camp, and save drawing them. This would enable you to keep a larger clothing allowance to your credit for future purchases. The army provides no bath-towels, no handkerchiefs, no razor-strop. If you want to bring these from home, do so. Likewise the army makes no provision for night-shirts or other sleeping-garments. The enlisted man usually sleeps in his underwear, and changes it frequently. If you take night-shirts or pajamas to camp, take several sets.

One man may be cited as an instance of this advance outfitting. He enlisted on April 13th, and up to June 30th his total clothing allowance amounted to forty-eight dollars and forty-five cents. Of this he had drawn clothing to the amount of thirty dollars and eighty-three cents; so he had a balance to his credit at the end of ten weeks of seventeen dollars and sixty-two cents. This man was thinking ahead, looking out for clothing he would need during the summer and the coming winter.

At the post-exchange you can purchase almost anything you really want in the way of extras, including tobacco, toilet goods, etc., and usually at lower prices than prevail in retail stores. If you haven't any money on hand when called to camp, if you arrive there literally dead broke, you can obtain credit at the post-exchange up to one-third of your first month's pay, or ten dollars. But this must be settled as soon as you get your first pay.

If you neglect to settle up immediately, you not only have future credit shut off, but you render yourself liable to disciplinary punishment such as extra fatigue, including kitchen work, cutting wood, etc., and the withholding of certain privileges such as passes to be absent from camp when you want to get away for a little change.

If you are called to camp, say on September first, you may expect to receive your first month's pay about the seventh of October.

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For this reason it would be wise to take a little money with you for current incidental expenses, if you can do so conveniently. But be mighty careful how you leave money or watches or any other valuables around, in a camp of thirty thousand or forty thousand men selected from all classes of the population. The sensible thing to do is to carry money in a belt, or in a small leather bag suspended by a cord around your neck. If you have a watch you prize, leave it at home and take a cheap one, if any, to camp. If you intend to buy a watch especially to use while a soldier, one of the most convenient is a wrist watch with luminous face. It can be purchased for a few dollars. Don't make the mistake of thinking wrist watches are effeminate. Most men used to consider them so. As a matter of fact they were first devised by a cavalry officer of the British army in India. Very quickly you will see that they are worn not only by lieutenants, but by captains, majors, colonels, who must keep constantly informed as to passing half-hours and quarter-hours.

NOW comes the most important suggestion for the man who has been selected for the National Army, and who wants to do all he can before he is called to the colors: *Make up your mind to give instant and unquestioning obedience to orders from superior officers, no matter how silly, or how unnecessary, some of those orders seem to be.*

This may come harder for you than for a soldier in any other army, because you are an American; you are not accustomed to taking orders: you have been taught from childhood that you are as good as any other man living. Yet this lesson of instant obedience to a superior is the first and most important thing you will have to learn. You may not see the necessity of saluting the officers you pass—but it is all a part of army discipline, and on that discipline rests the efficiency of the army when engaged in battle. In the army you are no longer a care-free man of individual initiative. You are an important unit in a vast human machine, all parts of which must work together, and work smoothly, and according to plans, if it is to work well and not fall apart.

You are required to do your share and no more; to obey orders at all times, and let the responsibility fall on the officer giving them. If he is at fault in judgment you and your mates may have redress later on.

In the early days of the war hundreds of thousands of European volunteer troops were rushed to the trenches. Few of them knew anything about discipline; comparatively few realized the seriousness of implicit obedience. One result was that in those early days of green troops, numberless brave fellows, aflame with the fire of heroism, took risks they were not ordered to take, attempted sudden, difficult effort when they had been ordered to remain concealed in safety—and paid for disobedience with their lives.

For the sake of the cause for which your country is fighting, for your own sake, and for the sake of your family at home—commence now, before going to camp, to learn the one fundamental rule of the soldier who wants to do his part like a man, and, as far as is humanly possible, insure his chances for coming home safe at the end of this war. Here is the rule:

Obedience, *Obedience*, OBEDIENCE—always; at all times; under all circumstances.

Unless you make this the law of your military life, you will never have the ghost of a chance of being promoted out of the ranks.

IN THE NATIONAL ARMY YOU'LL HAVE TO STAND ON YOUR OWN FEET. SEE THAT YOU HAVE GOOD ONES. GET FROM A PEACE FOOTING TO A WAR FOOTING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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PRITCHETT McCRARY

LAWRENCE FITCH

JOSEPH REULE

ADOLPH ANDREWS

CHARLES GERMAN

GEORGE HARRIS

LESTER GRIFFITH
NATIONAL WAR-GAME CHAMPIONS, KANSAS CITY H. S. V. U. S.

·H·S·V·U·S·

FOR BETTER CITIZENSHIP

Off For the Second Year

ONCE more it was a big idea that won.

Last June, at the close of the H. S. V. U. S. national games at Chicago, the War Department was forced, through sheer shortage of officers, to withdraw all officers, including Captain E. Z. Steever, the originator of the H. S. V. U. S. idea, from their work in the high schools throughout the country in order that every available man might be used in officers' training camps and later on in the cantonments for the training of the men selected under the first draft for the National Army.

This policy was sound and right. There was no one interested in the work of the H. S. V. U. S., big and pressing as that work is, who had a moment's doubt as to that. But with Captain Steever and his staff of experts withdrawn from the high schools, it did look as if the H. S. V. U. S. training would have to be largely curtailed, if not wholly suspended until peace should come. With but one term of actual training, the boys had not yet advanced to the place where they could carry on the work by themselves. The officers of the H. S. V. U. S. and the Executive Board worked hard to find a way out.

It was Captain Steever himself who found the solution.

Early in July he proposed a short normal course for the instruction of high school physical directors to be conducted by himself personally, if he could secure a short leave for the work at some central point. Steever was convinced that if school authorities who favor courses in military instruction in high schools would send their regular physical directors to a normal course such as he proposed, he could turn back to the schools men so trained as to be wholly qualified successfully to carry on military instruction in their schools.

For a while it seemed that the War Department would be unable to approve Captain Steever's plan. But when all the facts of the H. S. V. U. S. idea, the working out of it, and the results that had been obtained since January 1st, 1917, were laid before the authorities at Washington; and when it was demonstrated that the influence of H. S. V. U. S. training has made for better habits, higher ideals, truer patriotism, and more earnest purpose among the boys in the schools where it has been tried, the War Department late in July finally gave its approval; and as this page is written, final plans are being made for the opening of a normal course for physical directors to be conducted by Captain Steever personally in Chicago, beginning August 13th, and continuing for three weeks.

So all the ground has been held. And more, there is every promise that the H. S. V. U. S. will make important gains during the next year in its effort fully to nationalize the great movement for home defense and for better citizenship. It is assured now that the second national inter-high school competitions will be held in the summer of 1918, and the eyes of the whole country will be upon them.

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THE MESSIAH OF THE CYLINDER

By Victor Rousseau

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH CLEMENT COLL

THE story begins a short time before the outbreak of the great world war, and Arnold Pennell, who tells it, is projected into the next century by means of a vacuum cylinder equipped with a time-clock set at a hundred years. The cylinder is the idea of Herman Lazaroff, a brilliant young materialist who looks forward to a scientific world freed of faith and humanitarianism. Lazaroff is associated in a biological laboratory with Arnold, and the two men are both in love with their chief's daughter, Esther. One evening Lazaroff takes the other two into a secret cellar to show them three vacuum cylinders, in which, he professes, he means to seal up some monkeys and send them on a hundred years. By way of jest, he induces Arnold to enter one of the cylinders—and immediately the automatic cap shuts him in.

When Arnold regains consciousness, he is in a desperate state of weakness and bewilderment; but he is able to struggle out of the opened cylinder. Finally, the hideous truth dawns on him that he has been unconscious for a century. He makes his way outside at last, and is presently seen by an aviator, who asks him strange questions, and carries him to London. This is a city he never dreamed of—buildings fifty stories high, all dazzling white, moving streets roofed with crystal, people strangely dressed. Arnold is conducted to the Strangers' House, and David, the Strangers' Guard, explains to him this curious life he has entered. David tells him that the world, except for a few countries, is ruled by Science, that faith is dead, and that the Federation of nations is dominated by two men—Boss Lembken and Doctor Sanson.

Arnold is secretly summoned to the Temple, and here he makes the astounding discovery that the Temple Goddess is his sweetheart

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Esther, sleeping in the second cylinder. Leaving her, Arnold tries to make his way to Sanson. He is seized and conducted to Boss Lembken's Palace. Here Lembken shows him his gardens, and gives him a house, where Arnold finds David's daughter, Elizabeth, locked in. Believing him base, Elizabeth tries to kill him; finally she is convinced of his friendship; and when he escapes by means of a ladder hanging from a scout-plane, which has rescued her, she defends him against her father. In the Air-scouts' Fortress Arnold learns that David and Elizabeth belong to a company of Christian rebels, who are determined to overthrow Sanson. Arnold, pledging loyalty, is told that he will learn that night his own place in their plan.

A meeting of the faithful follows, in the cellar where the cylinders had been hidden. Here, Arnold is declared the Messiah; and here he learns that, to overthrow Sanson, negotiations are first to be made with Lembken. He offers to act as emissary, but before he starts encounters Sanson, who, he discovers later, is visiting the chapel to see if Arnold has left his cylinder. He also discovers that Sanson is Herman Lazaroff; that he entered the third cylinder, set at sixty-five years, and that he has conquered the world, while waiting for Esther to awake. When Sanson finds that Arnold also loves her he takes him prisoner, knocking him insensible with a ray-rod. Arnold regains consciousness in the vaults below the Vivisection Bureau. With him are David and Elizabeth who have also been captured. Suddenly, Mehemet, the leader of the Guard, appears and takes Arnold to Amaranth, one of Lembken's favorites. She makes love to him, and by her wiles nearly persuades him to drink wine so drugged that it would have placed him in Lembken's power. Being unsuccessful, she gives him the chance to listen, while she similarly entertains Sanson. He refuses to drink with her, and leaves, but she has drained the second cup, which, by the planning of a jealous maid, is the poisoned one intended for Sanson. Amaranth dies telling Arnold to kill Sanson, as his only hope for better days.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Heart of the People

I LEFT the dead girl on the divan and went out into the hall. I had grown suddenly composed, and all my doubts had vanished in the face of the single duty of saving Esther.

The corridor into which I stepped was as empty as the palace hall above. The air-scouts who should have been on duty here were gone. Before me was a door, leading into one of the numerous small rooms through which one entered the Temple itself, and at my side was a little window, through which the cries of the mob below came fitfully.

I pushed open the swinging door in front of me, ran through the room, and found myself inside the dark, enormous area of the Temple. I was in a circular gallery, surrounded by a brass railing, which ran high up around the interior. It was quite dark, except for a single solar light that burned across the gulf. Beneath it I could discern the shining, golden surface of the Ant.

I felt my way around the gallery, working toward the light, which dropped, apparently, as I approached it until, standing immediately overhead, I looked down and saw it shining under me. It showed the uplifted tentacle of the idol, the edge of the stone altar in the center of the bridge that spanned the Temple, and the body of the cylinder, which seemed to hang in space above.

I had entered the Temple upon a floor one stage too high. But I could wait no longer. The light might have been, I estimated, some twenty feet underneath. I swung myself from the brass rail and dropped into space. It was a mad impulse in the dark toward that slender bridge more than one hundred feet above the Temple floor. But fate was with me, for I struck the golden grill around the altar stone and tumbled inside, rising upon my feet bruised, but otherwise unhurt.

The grill was about four feet high, and the ends formed gates which, when opened, made the altar stone continuous with the bridge-spans that extended to meet it from either side of the building. It formed thus a sort of keystone to the eye, although not architecturally, since it did not uphold the spans, which seemed to be constructed on the principle of the cantilever. I saw now that it was suspended from the roof by steel chains, and over it, hung by two finer ones, was the cylinder.

At once I grasped the purport of this mechanism. Cylinder and altar stone were in counterpoise, so that, when the first was drawn up, the second would descend to the level of the Ant's pedestal, forming, as it were, a sacrificial stone immediately before the idol, and at the same time disrupting the continuity of the bridges.

But these perceptions were a matter of only a minute fraction of time. I looked through the cylinder's face of glass, and, though I could discern only the dim outlines

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of her features, I knew that I had won Esther, and that there was to be no more parting, so long as we both lived.

I stretched my hand up, feeling for the cylinder cap. It was still on the body, but it had almost reached the end of the thread, and moved from side to side under my fingers. I could twist it from the thread without much effort. If I did so . . . Sanson, when he was Lazaroff, had told me that it would bring death, but surely not on the ninth day after it was loosened. Air must have been entering the cylinder in measurable quantities for more than a week. And if Esther died—better that than that she should awaken in Sanson's arms.

It was a terrific choice. I hesitated only a few moments, but during these I lived through a century of agony. Then I set my fingers to the cap, wrenched it free, and flung it from me. It flew through the air and tinkled upon the floor far beneath. And, hardly venturing to breathe, I clung to the cylinder and waited.

No sound came from within. I tried to place my ear against the open head to listen.

At last, mad with anxiety, I managed to swing the cylinder toward me by the chains, tilting it downward until I got a purchase on it. I bore with my full weight upon the metal edge. I plunged my arms within. I felt the heavy coils of Esther's hair, her eyelids, cheek, and chin—I drew her forth somehow; but how I contrived this I do not know, for the platform and cylinder rocked fearfully as they swung. Then, in a moment, it seemed, I held her light and wasted body against my own, and we were together upon the rocking altar stone, while the cylinder swung rhythmically above, passing our heads in steady, sweeping flights as I crouched with Esther in my arms behind the golden grille.

I pressed my lips to hers, I chafed her hands and pleaded with her to awake. And then, as if in answer to my prayer, I heard a sigh—so faint that I could hardly dare believe I heard it. A deeper sigh, a sobbing breath—she lived; and with awed happiness I felt her thin arms grope instinctively toward my neck. She knew.

I knelt beside her on the altar stone, listening with choked sobs and wildly beating heart to the words that came in faltering whispers from her lips.

"Herman! What have you done? You have killed him! Then kill me too! I don't want to live, Herman. Kill me, kill me, you murderer! Oh, Arnold, my love, to think that neither of us knew!"

"Esther," I whispered, bending over her, "it is I. It is Arnold."

I saw her eyelids half open; she moaned, and I interposed my body between her and the light. Faint though it was, I knew that it was intolerable.

The faintest smile of happiness framed itself about her mouth. "Arnold," she whispered, "I have been with you all the time. I dreamed . . . Herman had sent you . . . a hundred years . . . but now I shall sleep and forget."

I knew the mighty grip of that first sleep. I caught her up in my arms—she weighed no more than a small child—and hurried across the bridge. I believed that the outer door upon this level communicated with the bridge over the interior court by which one might pass to the Air-scouts' Fortress.

I traversed the little room and pushed the swing door open. Before me was an elevator shaft, evidently that through which I had made my first journey to Lembken's palace. But as I emerged into the corridor I saw, not ten paces away, their backs toward me, a couple of Moslem Guards.

I was too late. The guard had occupied the posts abandoned by the air-scouts. The Temple and all the approaches to Lembken's palace were in Sanson's hands.

But they had not heard me, and in an instant I was back in the little room. There remained one hope. By crossing the bridge and passing through the priests' robing-room upon the other side of the Temple, I could reach all parts of the building. Perhaps it was only the approaches to the palace that the guard watched and there was no sentry posted in the gallery above the auditorium.

I carried Esther upon the bridge again. As I was about to set foot upon the altar stone, which had almost ceased to rock, I fancied that the bridge itself was moving. I leaped upon the stone, stumbling over the grille and falling. One moment I hesitated before arising, to assure myself that Esther was still breathing. A piece of her dress had come away in my hand like burned paper. I raised her in my arms, so that her head rested upon my shoulder, and opened the gate of the grille to step upon the second span.

There was no footing. Swiftly, noiselessly, the span was swinging away from me,

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pivoting upon its farther end. It was already too far distant for me to leap, encumbered as I was. I glanced back in horror. The span that I had crossed was moving also, the two acting, apparently, in unison to the same mechanism. They vanished in the obscurity of the Temple.

I stood with Esther in my arms upon the altar slab, poised on that unsteady resting-place. There was no refuge anywhere.

As I stood there the solar light went out.

The Temple remained dark. Crouched on the quivering stone, helpless in Sanson's power, I was not conscious of fear. Rather I felt a melancholy regret that this was the end. A hundred years of separation, the knowledge of each other's love; and it had all gone for nothing. Yet there was happiness in that this much had been granted me, to die with Esther in my arms; and the disappearance of all hope brought calmness to my spirit, and acceptance of the inevitable.

It was hours later when I began to hear the cries of the mob. Then, through every swinging door below, invisible forms came trooping in until they filled the whole of the vast floor. They shouted against the Christians in an unceasing pandemonium, and the walls and roof reechoed that infernal din until another spirit, something of awed expectancy, swept over the multitude, and the last shout ceased, and a new and dreadful silence replaced the outcries. Out of the silence, a low chant began. It was that chant which I had heard before, begun spontaneously and crooned at first by a few and then by many, tossed back and forward from side to side of the Temple floor, until all caught it up and made the walls echo.

"We are immortal in the germ-plasm; make us immortal in the body before we die."

There was a dreadful melody, one of those tunes that seem to rise spontaneously to a nation's lips as the outpouring of its aspirations. Again and again that dreadful, hopeless chant rose from the floor, and swelled into a din, and died.

Then shouts broke out again as the mob-spirit seized upon its victims here and there.

"Make us immortal in these bodies of ours!"

"Make us immortal, Sanson!"

"Give me eternal life!" raved the cracked voice of an aged man; and that blasphemy against Nature seemed to shock the mob into silence until once more the low chant swelled and echoed and died away in wailing overtones of hopelessness.

Suddenly a single solar light flashed at one side of the Temple; and high above the multitude, where the end of one span of the bridge rested against the curving wall, I saw Sanson. He was standing alone at the extreme end of the span, which, shadowy and vague, gave him the aspect of a figure poised in the air.

Sanson uttered no word, but stretched out his arm and pointed across the Temple. Then I heard the tramp of men coming from the direction of the elevator shafts that led to Lembken's palace. And suddenly, a second light burned across the vast void of the dark.

Upon the second span, now dimly visible, drawn back against the wall facing Sanson, I saw the captives from the vaults, marshaled under the charge of the armed guards. There, at the extreme edge, Elizabeth stood, a slender, virginal figure, her hands clapsed against her bosom; at her side David, and behind them the patriarchal figure of Bishop Alfred. Behind him were ranged the other victims of Sanson's rage. They, too, under that single light, seemed to be poised in air.

At the sight of them hysteria swept the mob into frenzy. "The Christians!" they screamed. "Kill them! Kill them! Cure! To the table! Ah-h!"

The groaning end was drawn out as the long vibration of a G-string that quivers after the finger has been removed. The air was heavy and foul with hate.

Surely Sanson's stage-craft was working well. The man stood there at the extremity of the drawn-back span, facing his victims across the void. He raised one hand, and every voice grew still.

"I have called you together, citizens, upon this anniversary of the world's liberty," he said, "because the time has come again to choose. I have given you freedom, I have given you peace, I have enlightened you and raised you to man's own dignity. The Christians used to say that man was half ape and half that mythical vertebrate known as the angel. I have driven the ape out of you and made you all angel—that is to say, all man, standing on his own feet, not leaning against imaginary gods to prop him. It has been a difficult battle, and all the vested evils in the world have fought against me. But I have won; your God, your Christ, the superstitious, stubborn heart of man have yielded. There remains one more enemy."

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"Death!" screamed a woman's shrill voice. "Make us immortal in our beautiful bodies, Sanson. Give us everlasting life!"

"The Ant!" pursued the speaker patiently.

It was an unexpected anticlimax. The crowd groaned in disappointment, and the silence ensuing was of unutterable grief. That Sanson would bestow this boon upon them, all had believed.

Sanson was too shrewd not to perceive that he had struck the wrong note. He swung himself about, facing the captives on the opposite span, and his voice reverberated through the Temple.

"There is no Ant, no God!" he cried. "But there is Freedom, hidden within the cylinder where she has lain since the beginning of time, waiting for this day to dawn. Now she is ready to emerge into a world set free!"

He stood there, a dramatic figure, the incarnation of rebellious pride. But, as he paused, the cracked voice of the old bishop piped through the Temple.

"I can give you eternal life, my people," he cried. "I have the Word that alone can set you free. It is the same that Bonham spoke to you in Westminster Hall while he was burning. You heard him and went home, and some wondered and some were afraid; but that Word never dies, and it will be told soon in a million homes, because, by God's mercy, the Russians are at hand to set you free."

The deep-breathed "Ah!" that followed was not of hate but of fear. Something was stirring in the hearts of the multitude, molding them against knowledge and will. I felt it too; a mighty spiritual power, a light that cleft the darkness. I saw the old man stand out at the end of the span and shake his fist at Sanson, silent opposite.

"You can not raise one finger except by the will of Him whom you deny, Sanson," he said. "You are not going to make any sacrifices. You, who have raised your will against Heaven—this night your soul will be required of you."

The sense of something imminent and mighty shook my limbs so that I could hardly hold Esther to me. I stood up against the grille and clung to it with one hand. There was no sound at all within the Temple now. Protagonists in their eternal drama, the bishop and Sanson faced each other.

Suddenly I perceived that the solar light above the bishop had moved. It had moved outward; now it was approaching me. And the light above Sanson was moving too. I understood what was happening. Sanson had quietly given the command for the bridges to be swung together.

An instant later the little lights that crossed the gloom were dissipated as ten thousand lights flashed out, illumining the vast interior. I saw the packed multitudes below, thousands on thousands, their faces upturned, each with the same stamp of fear on it. I saw the groins and arches, the gallery above, filled with the Guard; Sanson upon one nearing span, his Moslems round him; upon the other David, and Elizabeth with her slender figure and the clasped hands, and Bishop Alfred and the remaining captives. I waited, my arms about Esther.

I heard once more a universal sigh float upward. Then the woman's voice that had called out before screamed piercingly:

"The Messiah has come, who is to make us free!"

I saw Sanson stiffen and stagger backward among his guards. I saw David, an arm's length from me, staring, Elizabeth with wide-open eyes, the bishop's calm visage, the Moslems motionless as effigies.

Then, as if the power that held the populace in unison were suddenly dissolved, they broke from their places. They sprang with exultant cries toward the Ant; they formed a dozen human chains that reared themselves above the pedestal, dissolved, and poured over the golden idol. Among them I saw clusters of men—our men—with rayrods in their hands. They swarmed up pillars and reached out their arms toward the captives. They howled at Sanson, whose guards gathered around him closely. The conspiracy had not miscarried.

But all were shouting at me; the fanatic spirit of hate which Sanson had evoked seemed to have recoiled and turned on him to his destruction.

Suddenly the approaching spans stood still. They remained fixed in the air an instant, the end of each some half a dozen feet away. Then, slowly, they began to recede.

"Jump, Arnold!" I heard David scream above the uproar.

I saw the plan to isolate us there, where none could reach us, helpless in the mid-Temple. I gathered Esther high into my arms, stepped back, and sprang. I felt

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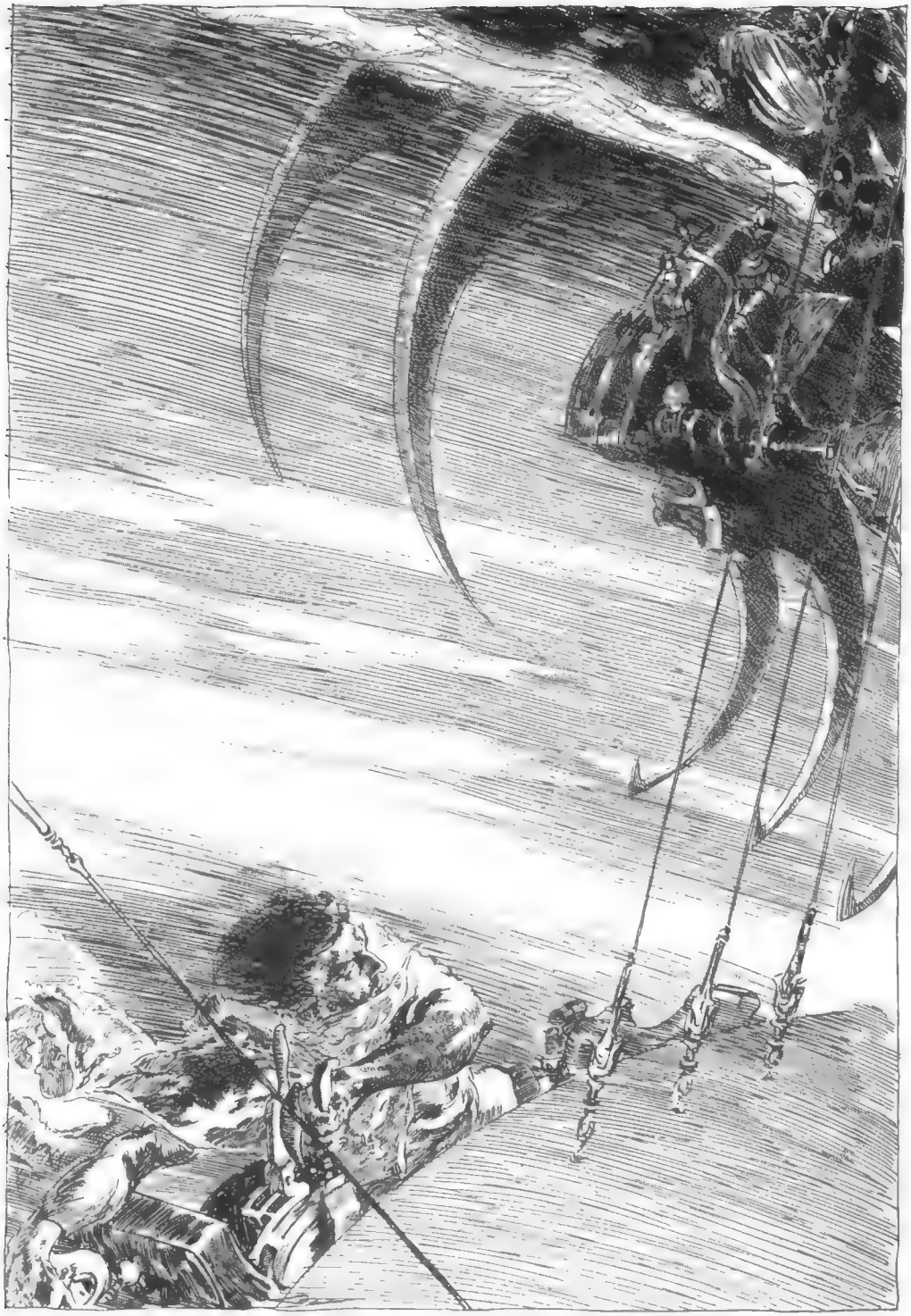

THE GIGANTIC CLAWS UPON OUR AIR-PLANE GAPED. WE DASHED FOR SANSON WITH TERRIFIC FORCE.

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myself falling into space. Still clutching my burden with one arm, I groped in blindness with my free hand outstretched. I struck the edge of the span. Hands held me; hands pulled Esther away. I stood upon my feet among the prisoners, and behind us already our rescuers were fighting back the Guard.

I saw the tattered figures of the outlaws everywhere. Only around Sanson the guard still held their own. He saw the situation; he knew that his own power was crumbling as Lembken's power had crumbled, and, pushing his bodyguard aside, he strode through them and held up his hand for silence. At the gesture every movement within the Temple seemed arrested; I saw ray-rods, not yet fired, held stiffly, arms halted in the air, necks craned toward the speaker.

"Choose!" Sanson called in tones that rang like trumpet blasts. "It is your supreme moment. Will you have your Messiah or will you have my gift—immortality?"

"Give us God!" screamed the woman's voice; and then a thousand and ten thousand answered him.

"Give us God!"

"Give us the God of Bonham!"

"The God of our fathers whom we have denied!"

The people had responded truly in their supreme moment, as they must always, that the world may not cease. For, in the words of Renan, "The heart of the common people is the great reservoir of the self-devotion and resignation by which alone the world can be saved."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Lembken Makes His Exit

THE maneuvers of the revolutionists had been so skilfully planned and carried out so surely that the Temple was in our hands five minutes after the attack began. Entering upon the side that faced the Air-scouts' Fortress, where numbers had lain in concealment, armed with three or four ray-rods apiece, they had surprised and overpowered the guards posted about the elevators and driven them in flight toward the Science Wing, into which Sanson withdrew with as many Moslems as he could collect about him.

The Council Hall and offices beneath it were occupied as speedily. With the Air-scouts' Fortress, we had thus three-fourths of the quadrilateral in our possession, the strength of the Guard being concentrated in the Science Wing and the enclosing double wall which was their chief reliance and our principal objective, armed, as it was, with the heavy ray-guns and commanding all the four buildings within its cincture.

The change of fortune was so swift that I could hardly grasp the significance of what was happening. Carrying Esther and surrounded by a frenzied mob, I was drawn along the bridge toward the corridor of the elevators, between Elizabeth and David, pent up among the throng—some on their way through the Temple to attack the Science Wing, others returning, hopeless of the attempt, and more, merely spectators, unarmed, and gone mad with delirious joy. The confusion was indescribable, and, to make it worse, these people seemed to be looking to me for leadership, and I could not stir among the packed multitude. Precious moments were passing.

At the entrance to the room that gave on the corridor a band of disciplined men appeared, armed, and headed by a man who struggled in vain to gain the bridge as the mob forced him and his followers backward.

"Follow me!" he screamed. "To the Science Wing! Capture the bridges! Follow me!"

As he spoke the Temple lights went out behind us. I was still on the bridge. Inch by inch I struggled onward, but in the darkness the confusion was still more undisciplined; and while the oncoming party still struggled desperately to force a passage through our midst, I heard a rending, straining sound behind me, a crash of splintering wood, a mighty fall that set the whole Temple echoing. Shouts, oaths, and screams came from below, and the span on which we stood shook violently from the concussion.

There was no need to inquire what had occurred. Sanson had cut down the farther half of the bridge and secured himself against attack from the top floors of the Temple.

Then a voice bellowing with blended triumph and ferocity uprose. "Follow me!" it howled. "Seize the elevators! To Lembken! To the People's House!"

The mob broke and dissolved, carrying me with it into the lighted corridor. I saw

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the leader with the Assyrian beard heading the rush for the elevator-shafts. He carried all with him. The shafts were empty; the elevators, wrecked by the palace party, lay, twisted heaps of steel, at the bottom of their wells. There went up screams of rage.

While we halted there the corridor lights went out also.

"Lembken!" howled the mob. "Out with him! To the People's House!"

Some men appeared with solar torches, casting a faint illumination along the corridor. The half-light made the furious mob resemble a crowd of devils. One impulse animated all. They plunged into the shafts after their leader, scrambling up the ironwork of the interior and clinging there as they worked their way upward. Presently howls of triumph, echoing down from above, indicated that they had reached the summit unchecked. The little band of disciplined men alone stood still, and their leader turned to me with a wry expression.

"Sanson has got his men together," he said. "We shall have to storm the wing from below. Half our forces have joined in that wild attack upon Lembken, who is helpless to hurt us, whereas Sanson——"

He shrugged his shoulders despairingly.

David came up to me. "You must bring them back, Arnold," he said. "They will obey and follow you. Leave Esther——"

He saw the look on my face and began to plead with me. "It is your duty, Arnold," he said. "All will be jeopardized unless you can draw off our forces. I will protect her with my life." He bent down and looked into Esther's face, and an expression of amazement came on his own. It occurred to me afterward that he had never believed that Esther was alive inside the cylinder. But at the moment the thought only flashed through my mind and yielded to more urgent ones. "They will follow you. For the sake of the cause, Arnold!" David cried.

I hesitated no longer. I placed Esther's unconscious body in Elizabeth's arms, and, without stopping to glance at her, lest it should sap my resolution, I plunged within the shaft and began to scramble upward.

I reached the summit and fell on the floor of the palace hall, the last of those who had ascended. The mob was swarming everywhere, in every room and through the gardens. I ran out under the dome. The sun shone through a gray fog, a blood-red ball of fire. It was high in the heavens; it must have been ten in the morning, and I had thought it still dawn.

The yelling throng swept through the groves. Its fury was unleashed, and the remembered wrongs of years impelled it to universal destruction. I saw at a glance that these men could never be restrained till they had wrought their will. With their hands they tore up the palms and tossed them down upon the courts through jagged holes in the transparent walls. They tore the panes out of their settings, twisting the sheer, unsplintering glass until it writhed everywhere, coiled crystal snakes among the uprooted flowers. They spared nothing. The roof was already bare.

I ran among them, calling them to follow me back, for the people's sake, to join their comrades below, hard-pressed by Sanson. Most of them did not seem to hear me; some turned their heads, stared at me, and resumed their wild work of ruin. Not one in a hundred of these men had seen my face more than a moment on the altar platform.

I turned and ran through the palace rooms, still calling, and still unheeded. The mob was sweeping through the palace like a human avalanche. It had torn the costly hangings from the walls. From blue rooms, mull rooms, red rooms, purple and gold and all the baroque, fantastic, and depraved trappings of Lembken's gleaning were heaped into great rolls at which the furious army hacked and tore.

In one place it was venting its rage upon a heap of masquerade clothing. This was flung from man to man, and some, tearing rents in the garments, thrust their heads through them and continued in the pursuit, with shirts about their shoulders and animals' skins about their bodies.

A tun of wine had overturned and spilled, and the contents crept like a rivulet along the floor, seeping from room to room. The conduit that fed the artificial brooks, being slashed, poured out a muddy stream that dogged our heels, befouling the rugs and tattered coverlets. Clods of earth clung to walls, mud bespattered everything. And ever the cries became more furious.

I followed breathless, imploring, pleading in vain. No one paid me attention. Some scowled at me and flung me away, some made to question me, but the spirit of destruction, seizing them before the words were framed on their lips, hurled them

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along. They swept me with them. At our head was the Assyrian bearded giant, bellowing in frantic wrath. The mob followed him as if hypnotized, and he, armed with a spiked stanchion which he must have wrenched from some part of the wall supports, dashed his furious assaults upon each door and shattered it, leading the chase down every corridor of the bewildering place, returning, hot on the scent, dog-like, tongue-tip thrust between his teeth and his great arms threshing the club from side to side.

The palace was enormous. We had not covered half of it, and we had seen no one. But, as we ran, shouts came from another party in another quarter, roars mingled with shrieks for mercy, and, keening above all clamor, that bloodhound cry that bursts from human throats when the death hunt draws near to its finale.

With an answering roar the mob sprang forward, battering down doors and wrenching for themselves weapons from shattered furniture and woodwork of the walls. The quarry was found. Like bolting hares, turned and sent scurrying back into the small, hidden room, they crouched, women and negro slaves, still wearing the masquerade of the revels that Lembken had held that night when his world empire broke loose from his power. Horned women, women in dominoes, in striped and spotted hides, in Grecian garb, mænads and nuns, sailor boys, harem hanoums, Elizabethans wearing hooped skirts and huge starched neck-frills, Victorians with parasols and bodies compressed by corsets, a motley, cowering crew, less abject only than the cringing, miserable blacks, eyed their pursuers with terror-stricken looks that sought their faces for pity and found only hate.

The giant leaped out before his followers and scanned the faces, whirling his spiked club. "Where is he?" he roared. "Lembken and all his men, and the rest of you?"

"There are no men," a frightened woman gasped. "There were never any men but Lembken. We have never seen any others in our lives."

He had lied to me, then, when he spoke of his friends. How long would it have been before I drank the poisoned cup if I had trusted him? I felt my own wrath and hatred become as implacable as that of the mob.

The giant clutched a cringing negro from the floor. "Where is he?" he shouted.

The man was too tongue-tied from fear to answer him. But a woman stepped forward bravely. "There!" she said, pointing to a door.

The mob whirled through in a torrent. I heard their shouts grow fainter. The women bolted, scattering through the dismantled rooms, seeking each her own refuge. But one stopped and came quickly up to me.

"She lied. He is there," she whispered, pointing toward the wall. "Kill him, and whisper my name in his ear before he dies."

I looked at the girl and recognized Coral, the maid who had supplanted Amaranth. I do not know what impulse animated me. I had no wish to kill the monster, but my eyes found the hidden door, flush with the wall, and I opened it and ran through.

The door closed behind me and a lock clicked. I did not hesitate, but ran along a winding passage, hearing the faint, distant shouting, and emerged suddenly upon a little platform fronting a portion of the crystal wall that was still standing in the rear of the palace. There was a brick wall on either side, and the mob had not yet discovered this secret egress.

A glass door in the wall stood open, and outside, at rest in the air, I saw the dark dispatch-plane with Hancock at the wheel. And at the gate, hesitating to set his feet upon the narrow plank that led to safety, was Lembken. His arms were filled with bundles, and on his shoulder a monkey perched, mouthing and gibbering. And at his side knelt a young girl, with her hands clasped, urging him to flight.

The old man heard me and swung round. I saw Hancock start, raise a ray-rod, and aim it at me. But Lembken was between us, and he did not dare to fire.

The girl leaped at me, clutching me by the arms with surprising strength, and crying to Lembken to fly. But the obese old man only stared into my face. Fear seemed to have paralyzed him. He did not know me, but my presence seemed to awaken some association in his mind, and, as I watched, I saw it flash into his consciousness.

"Jacquette!" he screamed, in a falsetto tremolo. "I have forgotten her. I must go back."

He scrambled past me, and the girl, releasing me, followed him. On we ran, till Lembken turned into a tiny room, once

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THEY CROUCHED, WOMEN AND NEGRO SLAVES, STILL WEARING THE MASQUERADE OF THE REVELS THAT LEMBKEN HAD HELD THAT NIGHT WHEN HIS EMPIRE BROKE LOOSE.

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THE ASSYRIAN-BEARDED GIANT LEAPED OUT BEFORE HIS FOLLOWERS, AND SCANNED THE FACES, WHIRLING HIS SPIKED CLUB. "WHERE IS HE?" HE ROARED. "EMEKEN AND ALL HIS MEN?"

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meant to be a hiding-place, no doubt, but now without a door, and bare. Again I heard the shouting. The mob was drawing near.

On a perch beside the entrance sat the gaudy macaw, head on one side, muttering as she preened her feathers. "The People's Friend," she cackled. "The People's Friend. Friend—friend—friend—friend—frien'——"

With a cry of delight Lembken snatched at her. She fluttered to his shoulder. He turned, and, with monkey and bird against his sagging cheeks, he began to make his way along the passage, the girl clinging to him. As we ran, I saw another corridor at right angles, and, at the end, daylight, and the waste of uprooted palms. The mob was sweeping past. They saw him; they howled and dashed to cut off his flight.

Lembken perceived his enemies. He doubled back, dashing in panic from room to room, back to the corridor. The mob was everywhere, searching for him, blocking all exits, their howls continuous.

Lembken fell on his knees and pulled a ray-rod from his tunic. With nerveless, shaking fingers he pulled up the guard. He held the weapon against his breast.

"Kill me!" he muttered hoarsely to the girl.

She dashed the ray-rod from his hand. She flung her arms about him; and thus the mob found them.

The giant leaped at them; his bellowings seemed to shake the walls. He sprang at Lembken, caught him by the throat, and forced his head upward. I saw steel in his hand. The monkey chattered, the parrot stretched out her neck and snapped, shrieking her phrases. Between the two the frail girl wrestled, dashing her weak fists into the giant's face.

The roaring mob choked the narrow corridor. "Death to him!" they shrieked. "Death! Death!"

The old man caught the words upon his tongue and screamed like a beast at bay. "Not death!" he yelped. "I'm Lembken. I can't die! I never thought of death—dying—going nowhere—nowhere—annihilation—I want to live——"

He cowered behind the girl, thrusting her between himself and his enemy. So furiously did she fight that she forced the giant's clutch from the old man's throat. She dashed her fists into his eyes again and again, tearing at him, too, until he gripped her by the wrists and forced her backward. He looked into her face for the first time.

"Let him go!" she screamed. "Don't hurt him. He is old—he is old—he has done no harm—he is the People's Friend—he has told me so—I love him——"

The giant dropped her wrists and staggered back. His horror-painted face became a tragic mask. He moaned, and his hands groped impotently in the air for something that he failed to find. It was not the blood in his eyes that blinded him. For this was she whom he had sought, torn from his home, the last to share Lembken's favor, the child whom I had seen dragged from the Council Hall, her innocent child's heart loyal in his last hour to the only lover she knew.

Five days ago . . . it wrung my heart, the pity of it, this blossom of love that sprang from that festering rank soil of human baseness. . . .

Next moment the mob swept over us. They seized their prey and stamped the life out beneath their feet. I saw the quivering body tossed in air and dashed from room to room, hacked, trampled upon. I saw it poised high against the broken walls, saw the dark airplane swoop to safety amid a hail of ray-fire; and then the air was filled with zigzag sheets of blinding light.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Crescent and the Cross

THE rays flashed to and fro, in zigzag streaks, like forks of lightning, but infinitely more brilliant. I was half blind; a whirl of sparks obscured my vision of the conflict; but I could discern that Sanson still held the Science Wing, from whose windows guards armed with ray-rods were picking off men in some place beneath them. Our own men were invisible; I surmised from the shouting that they were assailing Sanson from the ground floor of the Temple.

We had gathered a tithe of our men together, and we plunged into the elevator shafts and scrambled down. My pulses shook with heavy fear as I entered the corridor below. But there stood David, and Elizabeth knelt at his side, with Esther's head in her lap. She looked up at me and smiled with so brave an effort that I realized her own anxiety. Somewhere in the deadly tumult Paul was fighting, unless, indeed, he

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lay among the dead that strewed the Temple courts.

My men swept past me like a wind and poured along the corridor that led to the bridge.

"I have fulfilled my promise, Arnold," said David. "Now I must take Elizabeth within the shelter of the Air-scouts' Fort, our headquarters. You will follow with Esther, and then each of us must do as he thinks best, for our organization has broken down. All is not going well, Arnold: the ray-rods are emptying fast, and our attack upon the lower level of the wing has failed. Sanson has placed a ray-gun there. All depends on the air-scouts, and we must hold our positions until the battle-planes come to our aid."

He placed one arm about Elizabeth and hurried her toward the bridge. I picked up Esther, who was still plunged in that first sleep of stupor, and followed him. I saw him lead Elizabeth to safety in the fortress, behind our own men, but as I was about to follow him, a sheet of purple light swept past me, tearing a stanchion from the bridge and knocking down part of the wall of the brick house above, which had been for half a night my home.

A gun was playing upon the bridge. It was impossible to cross until it ceased. I drew back, waiting. The ray had found the weak places in the mighty buildings, and from the Temple top huge stones came crashing down, bounding along the courts and splintering into fragments. I saw one bridge go down, loaded with dead and living, as a deflected ray wrenched it from its piers. It poured its burden upon the stones of the court beneath, and from among the piles of dead, little figures leaped up and began to run like the denizens of a disturbed ants' nest, searching for refuge and finding none. They raced for the Council Wing, and there a blast from a ray-gun found them, and the steel entrance doors fell on them, and iron and men were ground to the same pulpy blackness.

I waited an instant, and then dashed wildly across the bridge, gaining the shelter of the Air-scouts' Fortress. I saw nobody. Before me was a flight of stone steps. I ran up, shouting. Nobody answered me. I gained the summit, panting and leaden-footed. The building appeared to be deserted.

From the roof I looked down. I saw the Moslems swarming within the Temple. They had regained that. Where were our men? I looked across toward the Council Hall. I saw the locust cloud of the Mohammedans' assault break against the doors of the public offices beneath it. That was our refuge. Sanson had driven the revolutionists from every vantage-point but this, and here they resisted with the last of their ray-rods. The artillery flashes were playing on the stout walls, but they had not yet found the interstices, the pinholes of unprotected surface worn by weather, and the broad beams of purplish light seemed to fade into the air an inch from the glow-paint.

Then out of the south I saw a flock of giant birds come wheeling. They swooped toward us and resolved themselves into the air-plane fleet. They dipped their luminous wings and circled round us, and a mazy pattern of light began to play among the Moslems' ranks.

The battle-planes had come to fight for us.

I heard an outburst of cheering raised inside the Council Hall. I saw the crumpled Moslem ranks dissolve. The troops raced back for their sheltering walls. The ray artillery shot upward to meet the challenge of the air-ships' guns. To and fro overhead wheeled the great shining birds in soundless duel. The conflict seemed the more frightful because of its silence.

Presently, as the flock wheeled, I saw one air-plane tower like a shot pheasant, and tumble. It plunged into the court, and lay, a shapeless, twisted mass, upon the stones. The Moslem ray-guns had found its defenseless parts. Then a second battle-plane fell. It struck the Temple wall, seemed to cling there like a bat, and, fluttering its wings convulsively, a dying thing, fell to the stones beside its mate.

The Guard was winning. The enclosing citadel stood fast. The tide was turning again, and our last hope had failed us. I crouched upon the roof behind the glow-painted shield of a single empty air-plane that lay at anchor there. The sun was dipping into the west.

Twilight fell, and the solar light blazed up all over London. There the vast, servile mob watched the fight passively from the housetops, no doubt, while here the soundless conflict raged. The battle-planes were circling high up in the air; there they were safe, but their fire was utterly ineffective against the Guards' Fortress, and I judged

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from its dwindling force that their storage batteries were growing depleted. Elsewhere the battle had generally ceased, though a ray-gun still pecked occasionally at the Council Hall, and now and then a mass of stone fell from the ruined palace and crashed into the court.

The game was in Sanson's hands, I reflected miserably. Our situation, always desperate since the first delay, had been growing less hopeful hourly. The only chance had been flung away in that mad rush to the People's House. Now Sanson was supreme, and he had concentrated his forces. Where was he, I wondered. I knew that his directing mind controlled the victorious Guard; I seemed to feel it in the coolness, the deliberation of our enemies.

Suddenly shouts broke out upon the walls, and were caught up and echoed back from the Council Hall. Southward, high in the sky, pin-points of light appeared, like vagrant stars, which became larger, extended, wheeled, and resolved themselves into the tiny glow parallelograms of distant battle-planes.

I heard the word "America" shouted from a thousand throats within the enclosing fortress.

If this was the Mormon fleet, come to aid Lembken, there was no doubt which side it would choose to join. That meant the end of liberty.

The air-scouts' fleet shot upward, drew together, and from its massed lines of light a single square shot through the ether, soaring up, rocket-like, moving in the direction of the oncoming ships, which seemed to hang poised above, like a new group of Pleiades. The rocket's apparent speed grew less as it mounted, until, so far away it was, it moved as slowly as any star. I saw another point of light detach itself, meteor-like, from the clustered orbs, and shoot downward. I held my breath. So all must have done. And not a ray was fired, and not a sound was heard anywhere. The two stars circled about each other, a binary orb; they moved together, and suddenly descended, the whole fleet following them, and the roar of answering voices rang from the Council Hall:

"Russia! Russia! The Liberator!"

Faster the lights came on, till they hung low in the sky, and the whole air-scouts' fleet soared upward and joined them. They swept the heavens in trailing light, and, while some disappeared in the direction of the city, others began to trace those mazy patterns of light upon the fortress walls once more.

Again the Moslems' artillery answered: but the broad, purple flashes showed that the Hamburg fleet had heavier guns than our own air-scouts. The duet raged furiously.

The play of flashing lights illuminated the entire sky. The great sheets wheeled to and fro over the walls, and search-lights and glow-rays blended, and heliotrope and pink and blue. It seemed incredible, as one watched, that death lurked in those shining rays. Once a battle-plane, caught as she wheeled, came crashing down; but the next moment a shout went up from the Council Hall that made the whole pile resound. For the air-planes' artillery had found lodgment at last, and, hammering at the fortress, dislodging mortar and stones, struck home. With a roar a tower fell toppling, leaving a great breach in the encircling wall.

I saw the swarming figures of the defenders placing glow-shields over the gap, heedless of the devastating rays. Then, up the street, where the moving platforms approached the gates, I saw a shining serpent crawl, a glistening, endless thing that wound and twisted out of the distance, until, reaching the glacis, it began to show as a line of armed men, carrying before them a row of interlocked glow-shields.

The roof of the Council Hall, whereon no man could have lived, swept as it had been all day by the artillery, sprang suddenly into life. I saw the ragged figures of our men crowd it to cheer their Russian saviors, who, armed only with swords, swept up toward the parapet of the Moslems' Fortress. The battle-planes, seized from the revolting air-scouts of Hamburg and Berlin, had been followed by the invisible troop-planes that had conveyed the Russian army. They had staked everything upon that blow, trusting to the superhuman valor that had overthrown their ray-armed enemies before Tula's walls.

I saw the ray artillery shifted to meet the charge. Fire rushed from the conical tops. I heard the wild cheers and answers, saw the Russian line crumple into a charred heap, saw the next line come on, and the next, and the next, while the Moslems worked at their guns madly and the battle-planes above shot down their fire upon the

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defenders. In the white glare of death the Russian lines withered like grass in a prairie fire; through it and over the bodies of their slain comrades, the oncoming mass moved steadily. The wall of interlocked ray-shields carried them into death's jaws, but the jaws closed on them. No man could stand before that light and live. Our hopes were dying as these brave men died in that holocaust. I saw the thinned lines quiver in that crisis that precedes defeat.

Then suddenly the darkness became as impenetrable as it was instantaneous. The ray went out from the defending guns upon the walls of the fortress. Only from the battle-planes above, the ribbons of purple and pink shot down.

For a moment I did not understand the magnitude of that event. Then I understood. Jones had cut the supply cables in the Vosges Mountains. He had fulfilled his promise, and in the very moment of defeat.

The same mad exultation seized us all. I heard the new note of victory shouted from the Council Hall. I seized up Esther in my arms and carried her toward the stairs. At the top of the flight I stopped and cast one last look toward the battlements. In the illumination of the searchlights I saw the Russians swarm through the breach, saw the whirl of their swords, saw them upon the bridges and in the courts, chasing the flying Moslems, harrying them, cutting them down.

Then I stood face to face with Sanson.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Admiral of the Air

SANSON'S gaze shifted from my face to Esther's, and, as if she felt the presence of the man, she stirred, and her eyes half opened.

"Arnold!" she whispered.

"Yes, dear," I answered, bending over her.

"I dreamed that—they had run up the annex thirty stories, Arnold, and painted the front all shining white."

"You must sleep, Esther," I said. "Try to sleep and not to dream."

She murmured something and her eyelids closed again. Again the merciful unconsciousness of sleep held her.

I placed her against the anchored air-plane and turned to Sanson. He was facing me with a strange look, that half-quizzical one that I remembered so well. It had in it more of human kindliness than any of the other expressions of the man's moods.

"Arnold," he said softly, "if I were an ignorant man I might be tempted to believe that there is really a God, sometimes."

That was his way—to speak dispassionately in moments of catastrophic importance.

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because He is so merciful to His defectives, Arnold. To think that you, with your missing five centimeters, should almost have beaten me! Come," he continued, clapping his hand on my shoulder, "a truce for a few minutes, or until that Mormon mob of yours breaks into this building. A truce, for the sake of our old comradeship. You are not to blame for your share in this night's ruin of civilization. You were the victim of circumstance. And then—you are a defective, and couldn't understand. Arnold, I have never had any friend but you. And sometimes I feel the need of one. Even the gods felt that, and I am far from a god, though, perhaps, later—" he broke off suddenly, and resumed in a less personal key.

"Join me," he said. "Here is my frank proposal: Join me, and, since I would not hold any woman to me against her will, if Esther chooses you she shall be yours. This night has undone the labor of many years, but those that are past are but as a drop in an ocean to those that are to come. I have the secret of immortal life—not ghostly life in some gold-decorated heaven, but life in the flesh, the only life we know. I will bestow the gift on you——"

"Let it die with you!" I answered passionately.

He laughed. "This night's work, which seems to you so wonderful, is but an episode," he said. "Come with me to America, Arnold. In six months I can build up my world anew. I shall be less scrupulous and humane in future with this miserable mob. No moron shall live, no defective go free. I have resolved that. Man can rise only by crushing out weakness and setting himself upon the necks of those who were born to serve. From this time onward it is a battle to the death against all that retards the human race."

His features flushed with passion. I stared at him, amazed, dumfounded at the man's audacity of mind. Trapped here, a

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prisoner upon the fortress roof, his life already forfeited if he were found, this man of sixty years planned to build up a universal empire. He was mad, without doubt, mad enough to dream impossible things and make them his in his mind's fertile kingdom, but it was such madness as accomplishes the impossible.

"Sanson," I said, "I will do this much for you. I will hide you to-night from the mob's fury, in a little room near the roof of this building, so that you may not be torn in pieces. I will assure you a fair trial at the hands of the new government, and perhaps they will not wish to start the new era with a judicial execution; perhaps they will regard you as the product of this dead age, not the cause of it. That is all I can do."

Would his dreams vanish in that hard light of reality? I looked at him and saw his face fall, as though my words had brought him to a recognition of reality. He spoke slowly, in a bewildered manner, as if he were struggling to understand my meaning. "Where is it?" he asked.

I took him by the arm and led him to the elevator entrance. "It is a little place under the roof," I said. "The elevator passes it. It is only a hole in the wall, and one would not look for you there."

I pressed the button mechanically, but the elevator did not ascend. Perhaps it had been destroyed, or, again, the cutting of the cables might have shut off the motive power.

Sanson withdrew his arm from mine. He assumed a listening attitude. Then: "Arnold!" he cried. "Look there!"

Unconsciously I relaxed my watchfulness, and Sanson dealt me a buffet with his full force that sent me flying down the empty shaft.

I had a confused sense of falling through space, of clutching at the shaft walls; then I was upon my knees, bruised, and my face covered with blood, staring up at the light overhead.

Providentially the elevator cables had not been cut; it was the shutting off of the power that had stopped it some fifteen feet from the top. Otherwise I should have fallen to instant death, as Sanson intended.

Still dazed, but dominated by the realization of Esther's predicament, I sprang to my feet and leaped for the ironwork of the shaft. I clung to it. I reached the top in an incredibly short space of time. I staggered out upon the roof once more. I saw a dozen Sansons, and each of them carried Esther in his arms.

I SAW THE RAGGED FIGURES OF OUR MEN ONLY WITH SWORDS,

Then a shadow glided toward me, and a hand was laid on my shoulder. I looked into the face of Air-Admiral Hancock, who was leaning toward me out of the dark dispatch-plane. No, it was not the dispatch-plane, but an unprotected battle-plane, of small dimensions, having at the prow a pair of the elongated jaws that I had noticed before. He knew me.

"Where is Sanson?" he demanded quickly. "He was here. He was tracked here."

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CROWD THE ROOF OF THE COUNCIL HALL TO CHEER THEIR RUSSIAN SAVIORS, WHO, ARMED SWEPT UP TOWARD THE PARAPET OF THE MOSLEMS' FORTRESS.

I pointed into the sky, where a parallelogram of light was diminishing to an irregular star. I leaped into the plane beside him. "Take me!" I cried. "He has stolen Esther—the woman of the cylinder!"

Hancock said not a word, but touched the lever. In an instant we had shot upward and raced like a swallow across the void, skimming and dipping as the wind caught us and the heavy prow plunged through the unequal air-banks.

The shadowy buildings drew together beneath us. The shouts of the multitude grew faint and died. The luminous point grew larger, and against the sky, now whitened by the rising moon, I saw the dark body between the glow-lines, a long way distant, as one sees a ship from a mountain top. Sanson was heading southward, perhaps with the intent of reaching France and rallying the forces of the government there before pursuing his plans further. We mounted higher. The forests stretched beneath us. Always we mounted.

I cast a glance at Hancock's face. There was a look on it that boded ill for Sanson. I was trying to remember something that Jones had told me about the relationship between the two, but my anxious thoughts beat down the elusive memory. I, too,

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felt that there could be no mercy for Sanson.

Would any one have mercy? I saw the answer to that question swiftly, for, glancing back, I saw two lines of air-planes strung out behind, like flying geese, converging toward our leadership. Battle-planes, scout-planes, bright against the brightening heaven, all came hot on the chase. I knew they were in pursuit of our common enemy, and I knew that there was hardly a man in London but had some outrage to avenge.

Higher we mounted through the bitter cold. My hands were numb; but Hancock kept the wheel, seated there, a grim, immovable, resolute figure. Now we burst into the heart of a fierce, rocking snowstorm, which blotted out the flight of our enemy, but by some instinct Hancock seemed to know his course, and held it surely till we rose above the storm and saw the glow parallelogram again and nearer.

Sanson still rose. He must have sighted the pursuit long before and resolved to test our endurance against his. The moon rode higher; dawn was not far away. We were rushing toward the sea, which lay, a blur of inky blackness, under us, edged by the white line of the chalk cliffs of the southern shore. All the time we gained steadily.

But Sanson did not mean to cross the sea. Perhaps he was planning to turn and seek some English city where he could gain a breathing-space in which to defy the new order and reorganize the old. He wheeled and the long lines of the pursuing planes struggling upward wheeled together, trying to cut off his flight. Sanson, mounting still, struck out eastwardly. But Hancock, with a furious swoop, drove in toward him.

I saw Sanson sitting at the wheel, one arm still clasping Esther. He stopped in the air and remained immobile as we veered toward him.

"What do you want?" he shouted.

The tone of Hancock's answer was implacable. "My son, Sanson," he answered.

He placed his hand upon a lever, and the gigantic jaws upon our air-plane gaped. We dashed for Sanson with terrific force. I shouted in horror, laying my fingers on Hancock's arm and pointing to Esther. But he did not seem to hear me or feel my touch—all his mind was intent upon the accomplishment of his end. I doubt, indeed, whether he had realized that I was beside him during the entire flight. He drove his vessel home, and like a hawk we plunged, struck Sanson's vessel amidships, and the jaws closed, smashing through steel and glow-shield.

One instant, in the dead interval of the stopped momentum, we hung motionless. I flung myself across the side, grasped Esther, clasped her in my arms, and dragged her from Sanson's side. I pulled her over the bows. Then I saw Hancock leap into Sanson's plane and grasp him by the throat. Only the satisfaction of physical slaughter could appease the need for that revenge on which he had so long brooded.

Our air-plane tipped, righted herself, and drifted away. I clung to Esther. I did not know how to steer or guide, but Hancock must have locked the mechanism to the halt, for we drifted idly, balancing upon the wind. Watching, I saw the two men wrestling in Sanson's plane.

The vessel shuddered as she hung poised in the void, mortally gashed, yet fighting still for her dominion of the air. She quivered from prow to stern, and then, of her own accord, shot like a rocket upward. Up she went, till she was only a speck in the sky above. Then from those heights something went falling earthward. At first it seemed to swim the ether, then it plunged swiftly down, passed like a projectile, and disappeared.

I saw a tiny figure that stood alone on the doomed air-plane, and, infinitely small as it appeared, I knew that it was Sanson. I fancied I could see the man's proud bearing; I thought his arms were folded across his breast. The moonlight gilded him, and others have told me that he seemed to ride through the air resplendent, as though transfigured by some demoniac power.

Like Lucifer he stood, high above all, high over his wrecked world. I pictured his disdain, and the contempt for man with which he shrouded himself in those last moments. The world had broken him at the last, but his colossal spirit could never be quenched.

Then the air-vessel plunged into the moon's heart and vanished.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The New Order

THREE months have passed. It is Easter Day, and we have only begun to grapple with the difficulties before us.

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But we are working with a faith that will overcome all obstacles. All the world is at work, for the same impulse was felt simultaneously in all lands. The Mormon air-planes never arrived, because, practically at the same hour, America rose in revolt against her masters. And the Sanson régime has been swept away forever.

We were taken from our air-plane by the air-scouts who followed us, and brought back to London. Our friends, who had thought us dead, were overjoyed at our return. It was a wonderful reunion, with few shadows to mar it, for Paul had passed uninjured through the fighting and was there to welcome us. And gradually, as she awoke, we broke the news of everything to Esther.

The amazing thing about that was that she was much more calm in learning the truth than we in telling it. She seemed to accept our statements almost without surprise.

I call to mind the second huge public gathering on the day after the victory, and the dread of massacre, which proved ridiculous. The populace had been taught carefully that the Russians were bloodthirsty savages, instead of which they seemed to to be grave enthusiasts. It was a shock to most of us to discover that they considered themselves crusaders, upon a mission to restore Christ to the world. I recall vividly the great red crosses on the breasts of their white uniforms, the people's wonder and terror at the horses, the fear of the Russians' dogs, which soon stormed the mob's affections and seem to have reopened a closed avenue to human hearts. Absurd as it would have sounded only a year ago, I think men love each other better because of their four-footed friends, the animal life that the world banished when Science set up her rule.

Then I recall the entrance of the Russian leaders into the capital, to attend the reconsecration of the Temple, and the joyful solemnity of that service. Then the universal joy at the release of all the inmates of the defectives' shops, the tears and cries that accompanied the restoration to their families of those who had been thought lost forever: husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and friends. No one was afraid to be glad. It was as if a dark cloud had rolled away and disclosed the sun.

And the amazement and enthusiasm as the people listened to the teachings of primitive Christianity, which had survived in Russia alone, and now, at last denationalized, was made the possession of the whole world. After three months there are still crowds at all street corners, hearing the doctrine and the story of Christ from preachers and missionaries.

And Bishop Alfred at the consecration, proudly declaring himself as Alfred London.

There is so much to do, and only a tithe of it has begun. Indeed, it would have been impossible, but for the decision that the old national boundaries should be restored, and each state work out its problems independently. Then there was the question as to the composition of the new British government, and it was resolved that, wherever possible, the Committee should avail itself to the uttermost of the established order.

Thus, for the present, because it is an organic growth and not a paper scheme, the socialized state will continue. It would be impossible to go back to the squalor and degradation; to return, recognizing that, if ever revolution was justified, that of our fathers was—against the greed of a materialistic century that dared to traffic in the bodies of men and cast the shadow of poverty upon the world.

The Council will be self-perpetuating, and no man will necessarily be barred from it by birth. There is an idea abroad that its members should be bound by vows of poverty. We shall have no representative government, no popular elections, no tyranny of an unthinking majority—only a series of widening folkmotes to decide matters of common life and none of government.

But if we are tolerant and lax, so that we resemble more a benevolent anarchy than an organized state, we have set our faces like flint against two things. First of these comes divorce. The family and religion are to be the basic principles of our State. Divorce will not be recognized under any circumstances whatever; and so far is this from being considered tyrannous that, as in the old days, as under Sanson even, the vast bulk of the people do not desire it. In the old time it was the privilege of a small caste alone—that same caste that, by abandoning its duties and responsibilities, brought down the old order of civilization. We are convinced that the permanence of the marriage bond is the foundation

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of every society of free men and women.

The second is eugenics. Looking back, we see how this madness overran the world, until, within a century from the time of its birth, it had enslaved humanity. It was the natural product of a time which, steeped in materialism, laughed at the belief in a human soul, or its concomitant, that each soul needed to work out its earthly existence in a body adapted to its abilities. But even from the material view-point we see that the movement was fallacious.

Acknowledging the hereditary nature of weakmindedness, nervous diseases, and certain rare maladies and deformities, we know that the proportion of these variants has remained constant through history; that the Mendelian recessive qualities flare up in the well-born and the ill-born alike. Moreover, since there was no stable human norm, the eugenists' demands increased continually, till they had bound four-fifths of the world to their Juggernaut car.

There is a place for every one in our world, and there are asylums for the insane and homes for imbeciles, the only unadaptables to whom we deny liberty.

So the first act of the people after their victory was to burn the bureaus of Prints and Indexes, and Pedigrees and Relationships. That was our only act of vandalism.

More than everything else we hold to Christianity as the foundation of our civilization. But the Visible Church is humble in her hour of success. It is no time of triumph for her. The first act of the Holy Orthodox Church was to appeal to ecumenical Christianity to forego all disputes that had arisen since the last universal Council until they can be solved at another which we hope to call. Reverently, penitently, at the huge consecration meeting in the Temple, her leaders asked for guidance and inspiration.

We realized that, so long as Christendom remains divided, the sects are flouting Christ, who prayed that all might be one. At present sectarianism inspires in us the same horror that all schism inspired centuries ago.

The Age of Faith is coming back to the world, and, as in that splendid thirteenth century, when it was in the zenith of its dominion, there is a sense of youth in us. We feel that we are upon the threshold of a new epoch, uniting the triumphs of all preceding ages. It is an age of joy, and will be vitalized by that art which, since the days of the Reformation, has been sundered from human lives. Its first achievement will be the magnificent cathedral which is to rise upon the site of the old Ant Temple.

It will be a new world indeed. We know each age has its own cruelties: the Inquisition of the sixteenth century; religious massacres in the seventeenth; in the nineteenth, factory slavery and the prisons with their silent cells.

We do not hope greatly to lessen this sum of suffering. There will be injustice always, new wrongs will arise, new evils that must be fought; but we believe that the Christian norm will always remain with us as a corrective.

And lest the passions of mankind break loose again and perpetrate new horrors, as in the Amazon and Congo valleys of old, new knightly orders are to arise, on the lines of those of long ago, pledged to fight human wrongs.

They will consist of young men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, vowed during that period to poverty, chastity, and obedience; and not only will they serve humanity but, we believe, their own period of discipline will make them the guardians of their nations' freedom after their years of service are at an end.

To-morrow bands of axmen are to leave London to settle Surrey and Kent. Paul and Elizabeth are to go, and later Esther and I intend to follow them. David will join us when he can be spared from his work in the new government.

It is Easter Day, and in the consecrated Temple I hear the anthem rise:

> Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast.
>
> Not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
>
> Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

The crowds in the great courts are kneeling. I kneel with Esther among them. We know that the sacrifice has leavened the world with truth that shall never pass away.

THE END

"Judith of Blue Lake Ranch"—a stirring story of ranch life, by Jackson Gregory—begins in the October number.

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MAKING THE MOVIE CARTOON MOVE

By Homer Croy

IT IS midnight, and not a creature is stirring, not even a mouse, when a figure appears at the gate and starts unsteadily up the path toward the silent keyhole. At the approach of the nocturnal caller the keyhole becomes agitated and hides behind the door-knob, successfully eluding every effort on the part of the puzzled gentleman. Again the man tries, and again the keyhole retreats behind the protective knob, while the gentleman becomes visibly ruffled at its actions. Once more he essays to fit his key, and once more the keyhole eludes him.

Plainly the man's expression shows that he will take this from no keyhole and, retracing his uncertain steps, goes to the street, where the workmen have been repairing, and returns with a sledge. He gives vent to his feeling with long and powerful blows, striking wherever the keyhole seems to be trying to secrete itself. A light appears at the window. By it is revealed the figure of a woman, who has the manner of one used to dealing with keyhole cases.

"This is the last time you are coming home this way," she says and, picking up a rolling-pin, starts after her erring mate.

He hears the voice only too well known to him, and fear fills him. He looks around desperately. Even a keyhole would be a welcome retreat; but of hiding-place there is none, and so down the street he starts with all the earnestness that he can command, turning back blinking eyes to see what success his efforts are meeting.

But, fast as he is going, his pursuer, rolling-pin in hand, is outdistancing him. He climbs to the roof of the silent City Hall and puts his hand over his palpitating heart; but in a moment the bearer of the rolling-pin appears. Dropping to the street, he runs faster and faster, but all to no avail. In a few moments he will be a prisoner.

Swinging his arms in a mighty effort, he jumps and lands on the moon. The wife jumps, too, but, hampered by her skirts, falls short and rolls under the lilac-bush, while the keyhole laughs to see such sport, and the animated cartoonist, standing in the lobby watching the crowd surge in, feels pretty cheerful himself.

Such is the conceit of the animated cartoon, the pen-and-ink play that nightly performs for millions. It begins where the accepted movie leaves off. Although

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flesh-and-blood actors have been run over by heavy trains and have jumped off cliffs that would give pause to the most daredevil Israel Putnams, they have not as yet succeeded in attaining the moon. That is where the drawings that live and have their being on the fleeting celluloid begin.

Seven years ago Winsor McCay made the first animated drawing detailing in black-and-white the adventures of Little Nemo. This he followed with a split reel showing a man being bitten by a mosquito, and then came his famous Gertie—Gertie being the family dinosaur who thought nothing of swallowing a tree or of drinking a lake dry. Five thousand drawings he executed, bending over his drawing-board forty weeks, while the world marveled and wondered how it was all done.

Shortly after Gertie fought her famous fight with the elephant and vanquished the same by picking him up by the tail and flinging him into the lake, other artists turned their attention to making drawings move, and soon animated cartoons were on the regular program instead of being exhibited in vaudeville as a curiosity. The pen-and-ink people who were looked on as a novelty three years ago are now considered a necessity by the front of the house.

EVERY day animated drawings are growing more popular. Film patrons are just as much interested in the antics of the unusual Katzenjammer Kids, and of the vicissitudes the family are having in Bringing Up Father, as they are in Douglas Fairbanks's hand-to-hand victory over six sturdy evil-doers, or in Fatty Arbuckle's efforts to ride a lodge goat.

But even yet few know how they are made. Almost any film fan knows that a real man isn't pushed off a cliff—that a straw dummy from the property-room makes the headlong flight; but few know how animated drawings are made, the explanation of the same being the purpose of this article.

To understand how a moving drawing is made we shall have to understand a little more about the human eye. Instead of seeing steadily, as one supposes, one sees in a series of leaps and bounds. The impression is not continuous. When one watches the flight of a baseball through the air it seems to be traveling in a series of jumps. This, as a result of the eye's conveying the impressions to the brain in a rapid succession of stimuli. The eye will convey and the brain receive sixteen distinct impressions in a second. If a slit were cut in a curtain and a wheel revolved behind it, one would see sixteen separate and distinct spokes go by in a second. If more went by, one would get a blurred image; if fewer went by, one could see the interstices.

That was the big discovery in the making of motion pictures—the discovery of how many stimuli the eye will record in a second. All motion pictures are founded on that; cameras are built to photograph, and machines to project, at that rate.

Looking at a screen, then, we see sixteen pictures go by in a second. We do not see continuous but intermittent action. For a man to raise his hand to his shoulder takes four pictures: One shows his hand at his side; the next when it is raised a few inches; another a few inches higher; and the fourth shows it at his shoulder. We think we have seen the arm leave his side and we think we have followed it all the way to his shoulder, but in reality we have seen only four photographs of it in transit. That is the sum and substance of motion pictures, and by it all things are possible—even the erring husband who seeks a lunar safety.

Holding the equation in mind that it takes four drawings to show a man lifting his hand, any one having a liking for mathematics can figure out what a mass of paper will be consumed in showing the returning husband walking up the path to the front door, and what his jump to the moon will mean. Thus it was accomplished in the early McCay days without regard for ink or spruce, but with improved methods the timber line is not pushed back with quite such devastating rapidity.

Tracing-paper and celluloid sheets that obscure nothing are the solution. In the McCay days the whole drawing was painfully remade for each step the man took—for each time the keyhole secreted itself behind the door-knob; but now the labor is much simplified by drawing the house on celluloid or on tracing-paper so that only the moving man need be drawn over. Each step means a new drawing: not of the house, only of the man. A drawing of the wayward husband is made with foot lifted, and placed under the tracing-paper, then exposed to the camera; the drawing of the man is taken out, another of his foot just

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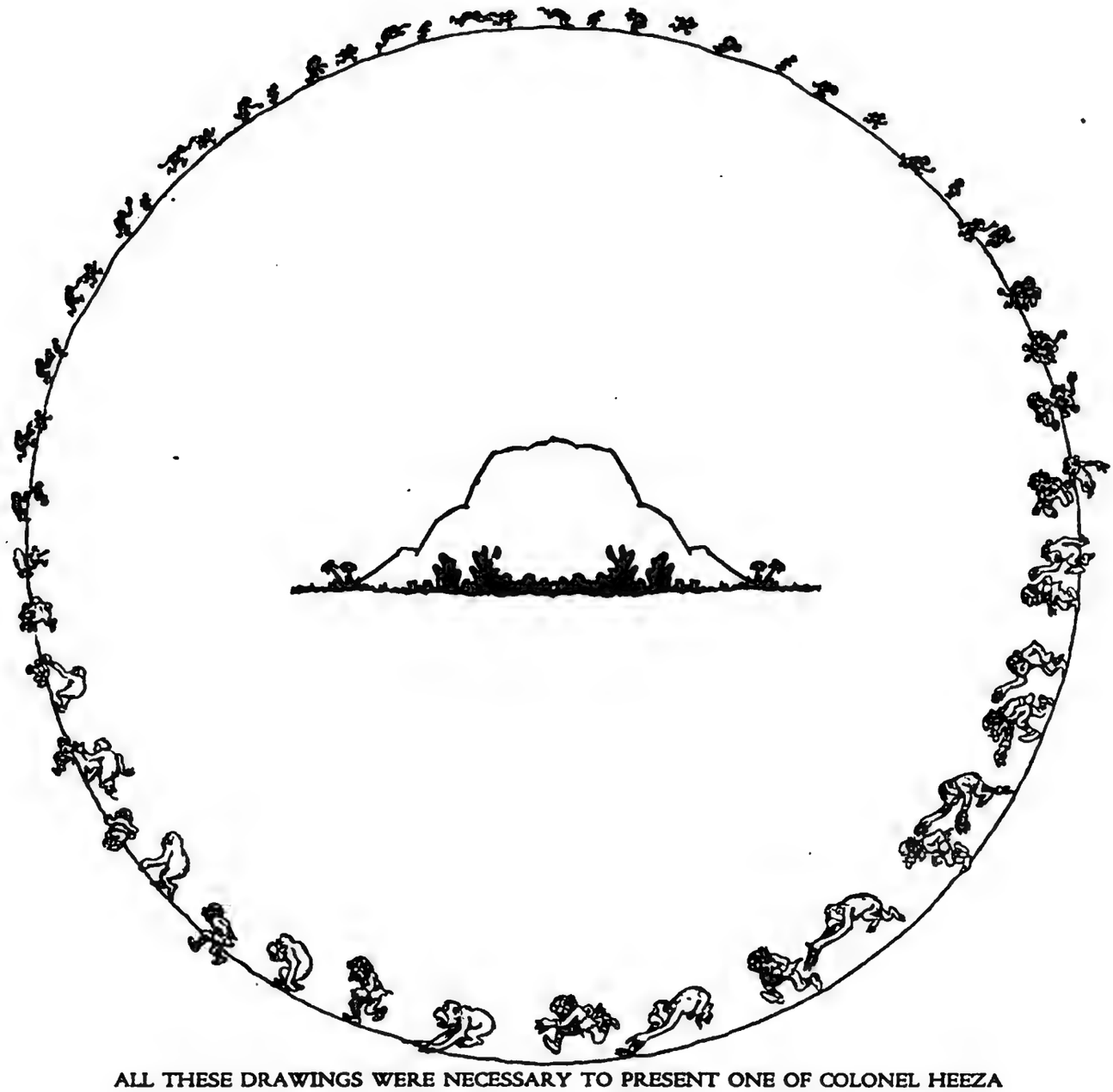

ALL THESE DRAWINGS WERE NECESSARY TO PRESENT ONE OF COLONEL HEEZA LIAR'S MANY UNUSUAL ADVENTURES.

as it is touching the ground is made, slipped under the tracing-paper, and again exposed to the camera. The house and the background remain the same, and thus the artist gets home on the 5:15.

When an animated series is completed there are something like two thousand drawings on calendered paper about the size of typewriter sheets, making altogether a pile higher than a man's head. Each sheet is numbered, clear through the two thousand, and then turned over to the photographer, who works with his camera suspended over his drawings instead of set on a tripod. To him is handed the exposure-sheet, which would never get by an English press censor. He would surely think it bore a hidden message, for it runs something like this:

CC 2	CD 1
C	C 1
CC 2	CD 3
C1	C1

This cryptic sheet tells the photographer just how many exposures to give each drawing. All day he sits under his camera following the instructions of the exposure-sheet, making foot after foot of film. But to him a comedy is not passing under the eye of his camera. The funniest contortions of the Boob boys bring not the faintest shimmering smile to his face; for if he does not get the number of exposures exactly right a tragedy will be enacted in the manager's office a few hours later in which he will have a stellar rôle. The comic

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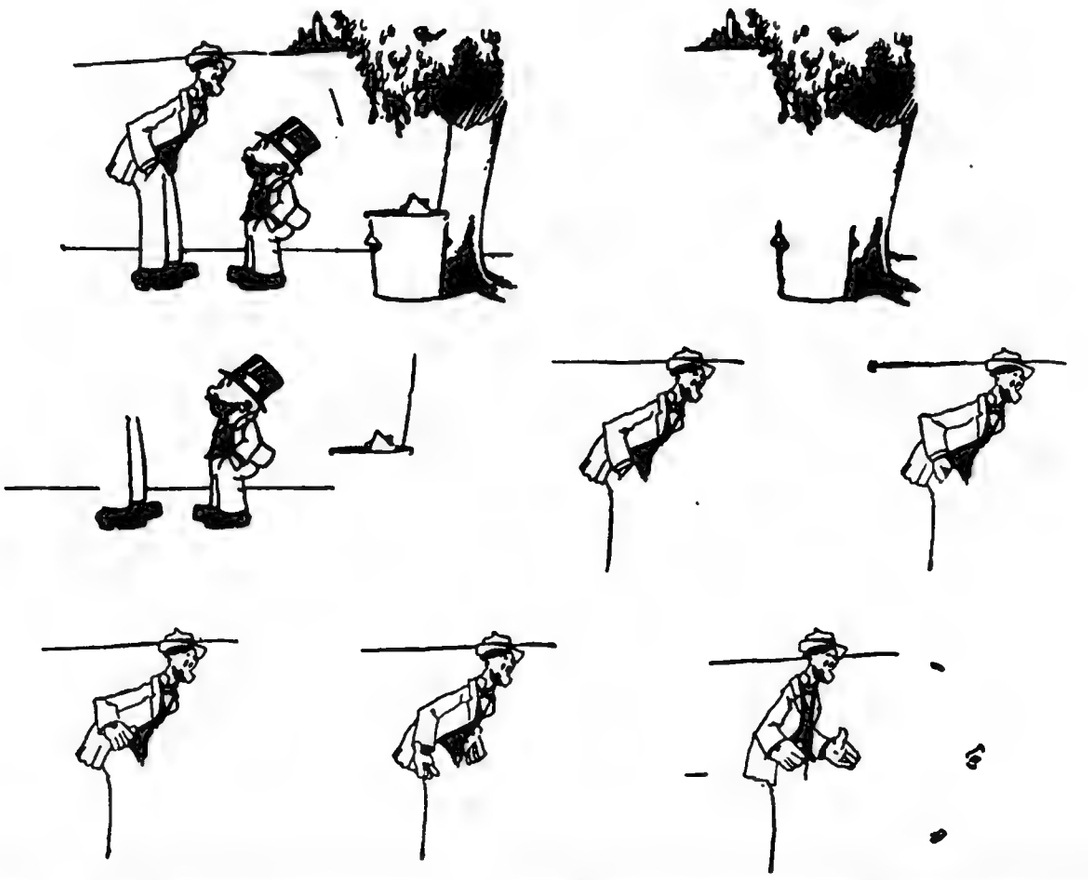

THESE ARE THE DRAWINGS REQUIRED TO SHOW THE WHOLE PROCESS OF WITHDRAWING MUTT'S HAND AND CLOSING HIS EYE.

artists may be sad-looking individuals, as is well known, but they are a jovial crew alongside the tense individual who does the photographing.

The husband in the course of his adventures may try to escape by train, and as he looks out of the window the different speeds with which the objects cross his range of vision are clearly shown. The telegraph-poles race by; the trees do not go quite so fast; the buildings farther away even more slowly, and away in the distance the hills are barely moving.

Here is a wealth of detail that in the early days would have driven the animated cartoonist distraught, for in the making of the early cartoons nothing was shown except the figures that had to move. Instead of having a man run down a street lined with skyscrapers, the artists were always careful to have him choose a lonely road with one small leafless tree in the background as the proper scene of his escape. To-day a range of mountains or a forest of skyscrapers doesn't stagger an animated cartoonist; the celluloid background is the explanation.

Draw the mountains on celluloid and that is the end of it. A mountain is easier to make than a man winking. The man in the train looking out really sees double and triple and multiple backgrounds. The telegraph-poles are on one piece of tracing-paper, traveling at one rate of speed; the trees on another; the buildings on a third, and the mighty mountains on still another. In fact, one picture was made that had twelve backgrounds.

That the audience never sees, nor knows. It thinks that each telegraph-pole and each tree and each distant Fujiyama is made every time a wheel turns. But with all that the animated artist has plenty to do. If he were to make a half reel, which is the average length of an animated, even with the most modern of methods, it would take him, working alone, five weeks. The audience sees it in eight minutes.

Which explains the shock a new animated artist, getting his first job in a cartoon studio, got when he proudly looked at his week's work and said, "That's pretty good, isn't it—eighty drawings!"

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"Yes, and the audience will see them in a trifle more than half a minute," returned the manager.

We will take the simple matter of Mutt and Jeff standing in front of a garbage-can, talking. Mutt takes his hand out of his pocket and winks. Jeff stands staring up at his friend without saying a word, so that the only action is the withdrawing of Mutt's hand and the winking of his eye. But to show even so simple a movement is a complicated cinematographic performance. Jeff is drawn on one sheet of celluloid, Mutt and the tree on another; and then on the first sheet of drawing-paper Mutt is shown stooping forward, as is made necessary by Jeff's diminutive conversational stature. The first drawing shows Mutt's hand well in his spacious pocket; that is given a couple of exposures; then a new drawing of him is made—and of him alone—with his hand slightly withdrawn. This is exposed as before, and then a third drawing is made, and finally on the fourth the hand is completely withdrawn.

Now Mutt wishes to wink; that is the sole action; so, instead of drawing him all over, just his eye is drawn—an action requiring three drawings, as shown on page 358.

His illuminating wink completed, another drawing is made showing him with his other hand exposed, the whole process of withdrawing his hand and closing his eye in an informative wink comprising two celluloid backgrounds and eight drawings.

When it is understood how complicated the process is, and how, even with the most elaborate backgrounds, two thousand drawings are required to make five hundred feet of film, then one understands better the difference between an originating and an animating artist and why Bud Fisher never makes a single one of the film cartoons that bear his name. Nor does Rube Goldberg, or Tom Powers. If they did, we'd see about six of their films a year instead of one a week.

The artist conceives the funny situation, or possibly only the character, and the animator does the rest. In fact, an artist, after having conceived the character, often doesn't know what is being drawn. Bud Fisher has never been in the studio where his Mutt and Jeff films are being made. A man whom the public knows a great deal less about gives us our weekly Mutt and Jeff. He is Raoul Barre.

But Mr. Barre doesn't do it alone—not at the rate of five hundred feet a week. Not by some four hundred and eighty-odd feet. He has sixty artists working for him, all giving us Mutt and Jeff. One man may make a leg, another an arm, and a third a coat. Mutt and Jeff is the weekly combination of the artistic efforts of sixty people.

So it is with J. R. Bray, one of the first men in the business, who gives us Colonel Heeza Liar, the amiable old gentleman who has so many unusual adventures in the course of a twelvemonth. Mr. Bray, who makes a million people a week laugh, got his humorous start on the *Detroit Journal* making morgue sketches. It was his duty, when a suicide was reported, to go to the morgue and pull back the sheet, that the world might know the next morning what the unfortunate looked like. When the idea for making animated cartoons hit him he was a free-lance comic artist. Now he has twenty men working for him and many papers in the Patent Office in Washington bearing his name, with a constantly growing tendency toward straight-line bodies and sedan effects.

GEORGE McMANUS, who came out of St. Louis some years ago, is responsible for Bringing Up Father, but the man who really attends to father's social education is Edward Grinham.

For fifteen years Frederic Opper has been making the world laugh with the antics of Happy Hooligan; and every fifth week Happy has a five-hundred-foot film adventure; but Opper doesn't draw those five-thousand tin cans. Frank Moser is the one who keeps the tomato repository in its occipital place. The same may be said of Jerry on the Job, the artistic brainstorm of Walt Hoban. Jerry is the animated product of William Powers, a brother of the famous Tom. Again, Krazy Kat sprang from and had her being in the fertile mind of George Herriman, but Mr. Herriman doesn't transfer her to the fleeting celluloid. Leon Searle looks after that, and the world wags on.

One of the few men who actually do the work credited to them on the film is Harry Palmer. He not only creates but does the double duty of animating, often stopping five minutes for lunch.

Although the animated drawing is seven years old, it is really in its infancy.

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Only during the last three years has the animated cartoon assumed a commercial importance, and made for itself a place on the standard program. To the audiences now following the adventures of black-and-white favorites, the drawings seem wonderful; but if certain activities now on foot culminate successfully, the present drawings will be crudities to be laughed at seven years hence. Then the sight of a present-day animated cartoon will move an audience to the same proportionate amusement that would be evidenced if one of the old Chase films were offered to the critical audience of to-day.

So far, only lines move; only outline drawings in black and white move; but wonderful new pictures that are really moving pictures will soon be shown to the public. They will not be just pen-and-ink drawings of a man successfully landing on the moon; instead of that, the audience will see the photograph of a real room, with furniture, complete. A man will come in; not an outline drawing, but a finished wash-drawing, possibly an oil-painting. The man will seat himself, receive callers, and exit—all a matter of pencraft. Real photographs of real rooms will be used; the wash drawing of a man will enter, seat himself, and entertain his wash friends. You may make a photograph of your own drawing-room, give it to the cartoonist, and a few days later see projected on the screen wash men and women making merry with your property.

But the end is not yet. The possibilities of the animated drawing are visioned and understood better by the man who made the first one than by any other person. In fact, Winsor McCay is now working on an innovation that will be quite as startling, when shown, as was his original Gertie. Two years ago he began on a series of wash drawings showing the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which will be true to life, with each drawing a vivid flash of the actual catastrophe—and each drawing a work of art. In addition to that he is going further to do something that no photoplay can do: He will show Christ coming to earth, floating through the sky in a blaze of glory, with each drawing fit to be framed. To show one reel of this startling feature will require ten thousand drawings.

With the perfection of colors almost upon us—as a matter of fact, it will probably be announced shortly after the publication of this article—Christ will be shown coming down from the skies in every detail of color. And further, Da Vinci's "Last Supper" may be put in the movies in all the wonder of the original colors. The audience will see the apostles with the Master at the long table, when lo!—suddenly Christ begins to move. Peter rises and Judas Iscariot hangs his head. And even to the Garden of Gethsemane we may follow Him.

All this is coming, and coming soon—and coming by the same method that gives us the absurd picture of the inebriate husband fumbling for his comic keyhole.

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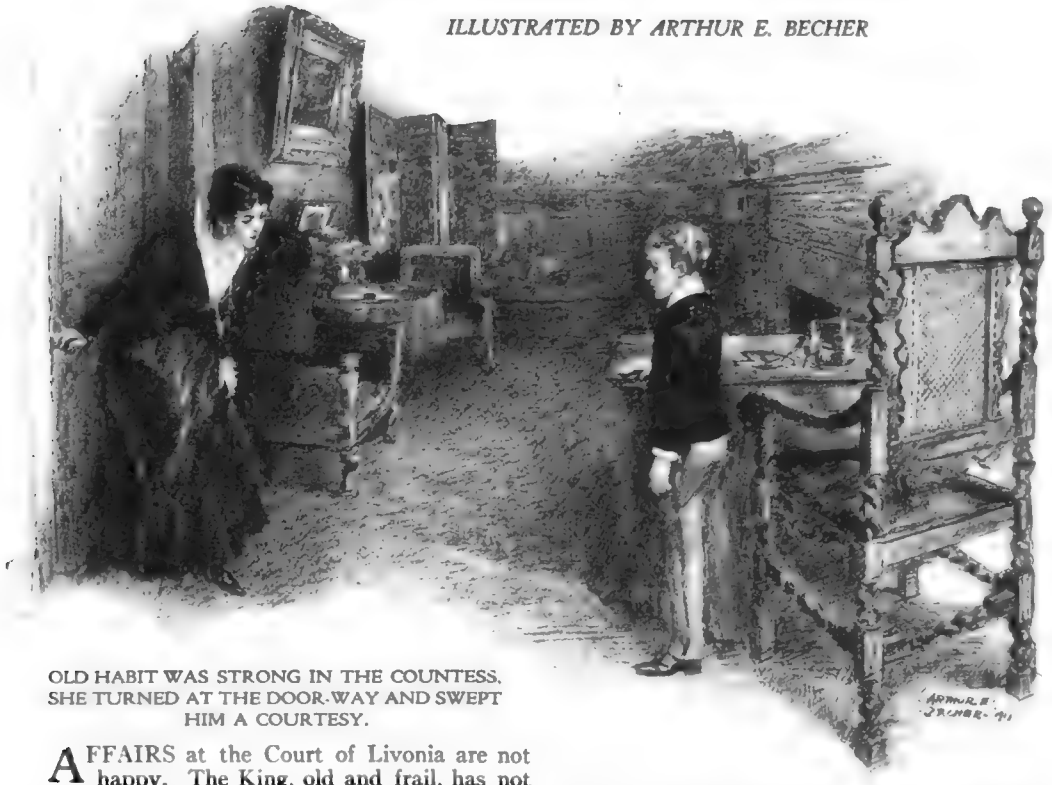
LONG LIVE THE KING!

by Mary Roberts Rinehart

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR E. BECHER



OLD HABIT WAS STRONG IN THE COUNTESS. SHE TURNED AT THE DOOR-WAY AND SWEPT HIM A COURTESY.

AFFAIRS at the Court of Livonia are not happy. The King, old and frail, has not more than a year to live. The heir apparent, Prince Ferdinand William Otto, is a boy of ten. There are stirrings of revolution all through the kingdom. A secret Terrorist society, which had assassinated Otto's father, has reorganized and grown powerful. One afternoon Otto runs away from the Opera and meets an American boy, Bobby Thorpe, whose father is manager of a scenic railway in the park, and to Otto's wild delight Bobby takes him for a ride. The Crown Prince returns to the Palace very dirty and disheveled.

That night the King and his Chancellor, Mettlich, confer over the boy's danger, and end by appointing Lieutenant Nicholas Larisch to have constant charge of him. This arrangement appeals to Otto, who adores "Nikky," and also to Otto's cousin Hedwig, next in line after Otto, who is inclined to adore Nikky, herself. But other plans are being made for Hedwig. Mettlich has convinced the King that the safety of the country demands an alliance between Livonia and her neighbor Karnia: Hedwig must marry Karl, Prince of Karnia, whom she loathes. The Chancellor unfolds this plan to Hedwig's mother, the Archduchess Annunciata, and wins her grudging consent. That same afternoon Nikky is told of the marriage plan and pledged to loyalty—before Hedwig herself hears the news.

But the Countess Loschek, lady in waiting to Annunicata, and spy in King Karl's service, knows; and, loving Karl herself, she resolves to prevent the marriage.

Meantime she prepares a code letter giving King Karl full data about Livonia's army and equipment, and slips it out to a messenger. But she is seen by a member of the Terrorists, and that night her messenger is attacked, and while he is unconscious a blank letter is substituted. Nikky happens to get in on the fight, and helps the wounded messenger home. Later, from the cathedral steps, he sees this same man pass his letter to a confederate in a car. Nikky hides in the car, and after it has crossed into Karnia, overpowers the driver, gets the letter, and forces the man to reveal its destination. He then changes clothes with the

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messenger from Karnia and leaves him, bound, concealed near the roadside; puts cigaret papers in place of the supposed letter, which he tucks into his cap lining—without looking at it—and proceeds to King Karl's hunting-lodge. Here his skill is unequal to the situation: he is forced into King Karl's presence and the letter he has believed so precious, the blank substitute, is taken from him.

In Livonia, meantime, Hedwig's marriage has been pushed forward, and Mettlich starts for Karnia to complete negotiations. It is he who, coming upon the bound messenger of Karnia, discovers Nikky's whereabouts, and secures his release, as a step in the arrangements by which Hedwig is signed over to King Karl. Back in Livonia, Nikky confesses to Hedwig that he loves her, but firmly refuses to break his pledge of loyalty. The Terrorists, knowing the Countess Olga's secret, summon her before the dread Committee of Ten, and demand that she prevent the alliance of Hedwig and Karl and help them abduct the Crown Prince Otto. Shadowed by members of the Committee, Olga visits her ancestral castle at Etzel, and later goes to Karl in Karnia to acquaint him with the critical conditions in Livonia, in the blind hope that she may thus prevent his marriage with Hedwig.

Her attempt is a failure. Karl has ceased to love her and, realizing her great jealousy, he discredits the information she brings him—of the King's desperate illness, of the Terrorists' plans, of the secret passage from the Palace that has been reopened, ready for instant flight. The outer opening of this passage, in the city wall, has in the meantime—though Olga does not know it—been found by Bobby, the American boy, and old Adelbert, once a loyal soldier, who is now embittered through Terrorist influence and ready to turn traitor. He knows the fate of the kingdom lies in his hands.

Meanwhile, the Crown Prince goes on a pilgrimage to Etzel, to pray for his grandfather's life. Old Adelbert appears by appointment before the Committee of Ten, to give his traitorous information. King Karl has a plain talk with Hedwig, and tries, with very poor success, to win her love, and the Countess Olga causes further trouble.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE (Continued)

ON THE day before the carnival, Hedwig had a visitor, none other than the Countess Loschek. Hedwig, all her color gone now, her high spirit crushed, her heart torn into fragments and neatly distributed between Nikky, who had most of it, the Crown Prince and the old King, having given her permission to come, greeted her politely but without enthusiasm.

"Highness!" said the Countess, surveying her. And then: "You poor child!" using Karl's words, but without the same inflection, using, indeed, the words a good many were using to Hedwig, in those days.

"I am very tired," Hedwig explained. "All this fitting, and—everything."

"I know, perhaps better than you think, Highness." Also something like Karl's words. Hedwig reflected with bitterness that everybody knew, but nobody helped her. And, as if in answer to the thought, Olga Loschek came out plainly.

"Highness," she said, "may I speak to you plainly?"

"Please do," Hedwig replied. "Everybody does, anyhow. Especially when it is something disagreeable."

Olga Loschek watched her warily. She knew the family as only the outsider could know it, knew that Hedwig, who would have disclaimed the fact, was like her mother in some things, notably in a disposition to be mild until a certain moment, submissive, even acquiescent, and then suddenly to become, as it were, a royalty and grow cold, haughty. But if Hedwig was driven in those days, so was the Countess, desperate and driven to desperate methods.

"I am presuming, Highness, on your mother's kindness to me, and your own, to speak frankly."

"Well, go on," said Hedwig, resignedly. But the next words brought her up in her chair.

"Are you going to allow your life to be ruined?" was what the Countess said.

Careful! Hedwig had thrown up her head and looked at her with hostile eyes. But the next moment she had forgotten she was a princess, and the granddaughter to the King, and remembered only that she was a woman, and terror-stricken. She flung out her arms, and then buried her face in them.

"How can I help it?" she said.

"How can you *do* it?" Olga Loschek countered. "After all, it is you who must do this thing. No one else. It is you they are offering on the altar of their ambition."

"Ambition?"

"Ambition. What else is it? Surely you do not believe these tales they tell—old wives' tales of plot and counterplot!"

"But the Chancellor——"

"Certainly the Chancellor!" mocked Olga Loschek. "Highness, for years he has had a dream. A great dream. It is not for you

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and me to say it is not noble. But, to fulfil his dream, to bring prosperity and greatness to the country, and naturally, to him who plans it, there is a price to pay. He would have you pay it."

Hedwig raised her face and searched the other woman's eyes.

"That is all, then?" she said. "All this other, this fright, this talk of treason and danger, that is not true?"

"Not so true as he would have you believe," replied Olga Loschek, steadily. "There are malcontents everywhere, in every land. A few madmen who dream dreams, like Mettlich himself, only not the same dream. It is all ambition, one dream or another."

"But my grandfather——"

"An old man, in the hands of his Ministers!"

Hedwig rose and paced the floor, her fingers twisting nervously. "But it is too late," she cried at last. Everything is arranged. I can not refuse now. They would—I don't know what they would do to me!"

"Do! To the granddaughter of the King! What can they do?"

That aspect of things, to do her credit, had never occurred to Hedwig. She had seen herself, hopeless and alone, surrounded by the powerful, herself friendless. But, if there was no danger to save her family from? If her very birth, which had counted so far for so little, would bring her immunity and even safety?

She paused in front of the Countess. "What can I do?" she asked, pitifully.

"That I dare not presume to say. I came because I felt—I can only say what, in your place, I should do."

"I am afraid. You would not be afraid." Hedwig shivered. "What would you do?"

"If I knew, Highness, that some one, for whom I cared, himself cared deeply enough to make any sacrifice, I should demand happiness. I rather think I should lose the world, and gain something like happiness."

"Demand!" Hedwig said hopelessly. "Yes, you would demand it. I can not demand things. I am always too frightened."

The Countess rose. "I am afraid I have done an unwise thing," she said. "If your mother knew—" She shrugged her shoulders.

"You have only been kind. I have so few who really care."

The Countess courtesied, and made for the door. "I must go," she said, "before I go further, Highness. My apology is that I saw you unhappy, and that I resented it, because——"

"Yes?"

"Because I considered it unnecessary."

She was a very wise woman. She left then, and let the next step come from Hedwig. It followed, as a matter of record, within the hour, at least four hours sooner than she had anticipated. She was in her boudoir, not reading, not even thinking, but sitting staring ahead, as Minna had seen her do repeatedly in the past weeks. She dared not think, for that matter.

Although she was still in waiting, the Archduchess was making few demands on her. A very fever of preparation was on Annunciata. She spent hours over laces and lingerie, material, furs and fashion books, while maids scurried about and dealers and dressmakers awaited her pleasure. She was, perhaps, happier than she had been for years.

Hedwig's notification that she would visit the Countess, therefore, found her at leisure and alone. She followed the announcement almost immediately, and if she had shown cowardice before, she showed none now. She disregarded the chair Olga Loschek offered, and came to the point with a directness that was like the King's.

"I have come," she said simply, "to find out what to do."

The Countess was as direct. "I can not tell you what to do, Highness. I can only tell you what I would do."

"Very well." Hedwig showed a touch of impatience. This was quibbling, and it annoyed her.

"I should go away now, with the person I cared about."

"Where would you go?"

"The world is wide, Highness."

"Not wide enough to hide in, I am afraid."

"For myself," said the Countess, "the problem would not be difficult. I should go to my place in the mountains. An old priest, who knows me well, would perform the marriage. After that they might find me if they liked. It would be too late."

Emergency had given Hedwig insight. She saw that the woman before her, voicing dangerous doctrine, would protect herself by letting the initiative come from Hedwig.

"This priest—he might be difficult."

"Not to a young couple, come to him perhaps in peasant costume. They are glad to

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marry, these fathers. There is much irregularity. I fancy," she added, still with her carefully detached manner, "that a marriage could be easily arranged."

But, before long, she had dropped her pretense of aloofness, and was taking the lead. Hedwig, weary with the struggle, and now trembling with nervousness, put herself in her hands, listening while she planned, agreed eagerly to everything. Something of grim amusement came into Olga Loschek's face after a time. By doing this thing she would lose everything. It would be impossible to conceal her connivance. No one, knowing Hedwig, would for a moment imagine the plan hers. Or Nikky's either, for that matter.

She, then, would lose everything, even Karl, who was already lost to her. But—and her face grew set and her eyes hard—she would let those plotters in their grisly catacombs do their own filthy work. Her hands would be clean of that. Hence her amusement that at this late day she, Olga Loschek, should be saving her own soul.

So it was arranged, to the last detail. For it must be done at once. Hedwig, a trifle terrified, would have postponed it a day or so, but the Countess was insistent. Only she knew how the very hours counted, had them numbered, indeed, and watched them flying by with a sinking heart.

She made a few plans herself, in those moments when Hedwig relapsed into rapturous if somewhat frightened dreams. She had some money, and her jewels. She would go to England, and there live quietly until things settled down. Then, perhaps, she would go some day to Karl, and with this madness for Hedwig dead by her marriage, perhaps—! She planned no further.

If she gave a fleeting thought to the Palace, to the Crown Prince and his impending fate, she dismissed it quickly. She had no affection for Annunciata, and as to the boy, let them look out for him. Let Mettlich guard his treasure, or lose it to his peril. The passage under the gate was not of her discovery or informing.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Nikky and Hedwig

NIKKY had gone back to his lodging, where his servant was packing his things. For Nikky was now of His Majesty's household, and must exchange his shabby old rooms for the cold magnificence of the Palace.

Toto had climbed to the chair beside him, and was inspecting his pockets, one by one. Toto was rather a problem, in the morning. But then everything was a problem now. He decided to leave the dog with the landlady, and to hope for a chance to talk the authorities over. Nikky himself considered that a small boy without a dog was as incomplete as, for instance, a buttonhole without a button.

He was very downhearted. To the Crown Prince, each day, he gave the best that was in him, played and rode, invented delightful nonsense to bring the boy's quick laughter, carried pocketfuls of bones to the secret revolt of his soldierly soul, was boyish and tender, frivolous or thoughtful, as the occasion seemed to warrant.

And always he was watchful, his revolver always ready and in touch, his eyes keen, his body even when it seemed most relaxed, always tense to spring. For Nikky knew the temper of the people; knew that a crisis was approaching, and that on this small boy in his charge hung that crisis.

The guard at the Palace had been trebled, but even in that lay weakness.

"Too many strange faces," the Chancellor had said to him, shaking his head. "Too many servants in livery, and flunkies whom no one knows. How can we prevent men, in such livery, from impersonating our own agents? One, two, a half dozen, they could gain access to the Palace, could commit a mischief under our very eyes."

So Nikky trusted in his own right arm and in nothing else. At night the Palace guard was smaller, and could be watched. There were no servants about to complicate the situation. But in the daytime, and especially now with the procession of milliners and dressmakers, messengers and dealers, it was more difficult. Nikky watched these people, as he happened on them, with suspicion and hatred. Hatred not only of what they might be, but hatred of what they were, of the thing they typified, Hedwig's approaching marriage.

The very size of the Palace, its unused rooms, its long and rambling corridors, its rambling wings and ancient turrets, was against its safety.

Since the demonstration against Karl, the riding-school hour had been given up. There were no drives in the park. The

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HEDWIG ROSE AND PACED THE FLOOR, HER FINGERS TWISTING NERVOUSLY. "BUT IT IS TOO LATE!" SHE CRIED AT LAST.

illness of the King furnished sufficient excuse, but the truth was that the royal family was practically besieged, by it knew not what. Two police agents had been found dead the morning after Karl's departure, on the outskirts of the city, lying together in a plowed field. They bore marks of struggle, and each had been stabbed through the veins of the neck, as though they had been first subdued and then scientifically destroyed.

Nikky, summoned to the Chancellor's house that morning, had been told the facts, and had stood, rather still and tense, while Mettlich recounted them.

"Our very precautions are our danger," said the Chancellor. "And the King—" he stopped and sat, tapping his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"And the King, sir?"

"Almost at the end. A day or two."

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On that day came fresh news, alarming enough. More copies of the seditious paper were in circulation in the city and the surrounding country. The town was searched for the press which had printed them, but it was not located. Which was not surprising, since it had been lowered through a trap into a sub-cellar of the house on the Road of the Good Children, and the trap-door covered with rubbish.

Karl, with Hedwig in his thoughts, had returned to mobilize his army not far from the border for the spring maneuvers, and at a meeting of the King's Council the matter of a mobilization in Livonia was seriously considered.

Fat Friese favored it, and made an impassioned speech, with sweat thick on his heavy face.

"I am not cowardly," he finished. "I fear nothing for myself or for those belonging to me. But the duty of this Council is to preserve the throne for the Crown Prince, at any cost. And, if we can not trust the army, in what can we trust?"

"In God," said the Chancellor, grimly.

In the end nothing was done. Mobilization might precipitate the crisis, and there was always the fear that the army, in parts, was itself disloyal.

It was Marschall, always nervous and now pallid with terror, who suggested abandoning the marriage between Hedwig and Karl.

"Until this matter came up," he said, avoiding Mettlich's eyes, "there was danger, but of a small party only, the Revolutionary one. One which, by increased effort on the part of the secret police, might have been suppressed. It is this new measure which is fatal. The people detest it. They can not forget, if we can, the many scores of hatred we still owe to Karnia. We have, by our own act, alienated the better class of citizens. Why not abandon this marriage, which, gentlemen, I believe will be fatal. It has not yet been announced. We may still withdraw with honor."

He looked around the table with anxious, haunted eyes, opened wide so that the pupils appeared small and staring in their setting of blood-shot white. The Chancellor glanced around, also.

"It is not always easy to let the people of a country know what is good for them and for it. To retreat now is to show our weakness, to make an enemy again of King Karl, and to gain us nothing, not even safety. As well abdicate, and turn the country over to the Terrorists! And, in this crisis, let me remind you of something you persistently forget. Whatever the views of the solid citizens may be as to this marriage, and once it is effected, they will accept it without doubt, the Crown Prince is now and will remain the idol of the country. It is on his popularity we must depend. We must capitalize it. Mobs are sentimental. Whatever the Terrorists may think, this I know: that when the bell announces His Majesty's death, when Ferdinand William Otto steps out on the balcony, a small and lonely child, they will rally to him. That figure will be more potent than a thousand demagogues, haranguing in the public streets."

The Council broke up in confusion. Nothing had been done, or would be done. Mettlich of the Iron Hand had held them, would continue to hold them.

The King, meanwhile, lay dying, Doctor Weiderman in constant attendance, other physicians coming and going. His apartments were silent. Rugs covered the corridors, that no footfall disturb his quiet hours. The nursing sisters attended him, one by his bedside, one always on her knees at the *prie-dieu* in the small room beyond. He wanted little, now and then a sip of water, the cooled juice of fruit. Injections of stimulants, given by Doctor Weiderman himself, had scarred his old arms with purplish marks, and absorbed more and more slowly as the hours went on.

He rarely slept, but lay inert and not unhappy. Now and then one of his gentlemen, given permission, tiptoed into the room, and stood looking down at his royal master. Annunciata came, and was at last stricken by conscience to a prayer at his bedside. On one of her last visits that was, she got up to find his eyes fixed on her.

"Father," she began.

He made no motion.

"Father, can you hear me?"

"Yes."

"I—I have been a bad daughter to you. I am sorry. It is late now to tell you, but I am sorry. Can I do anything?"

"Otto," he said, with difficulty.

"You want to see him?"

"No."

She knew what he meant by that. He would have the boy remember him as he had seen him last.

"You are anxious about him?"

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"Very—anxious."

"Listen, father," she said, stooping over him. "I have been hard and cold. Perhaps you will grant that I have had two reasons for it. But I am going to do better. I will take care of him and I will do all I can to make him happy. I promise."

Perhaps it was relief. Perhaps even then the thought of Annunciata's tardy and certain to be bungling efforts to make Ferdinand William Otto happy amused him. He smiled faintly.

Nikky, watching his rooms being dismantled, rescuing an old pipe now and then, or a pair of shabby but beloved boots, Nikky, whistling to keep up his courage, received a note from Hedwig late that afternoon. It was very brief:

To-night at nine o'clock I shall go to the roof beyond Hubert's old rooms, for air. HEDWIG.

Nikky, who in all his incurious young life had never even thought of the roof of the Palace, save as a necessary shelter from the weather, a thing of tiles and gutters, vastly large, looked rather astounded.

"The roof!" he said, surveying the note. And fell to thinking, such a mixture of rapture and despair as only twenty-three, and hopeless, can know.

Somehow or other he got through the intervening hours, and before nine he was on his way. He had the run of the Palace, of course. No one noticed him as he made his way toward the empty suite, which so recently had housed its royal visitor.

In the faint moonlight, poor Hubert's rooms, with their refurbished furnishings covered with white linen, looked cold and almost terrifying. A long window was open, and the velvet curtain swayed as though it shielded some dismal figure. But, when he had crossed the room and drawn the curtain aside, it was to see a bit of fairyland, the roof transformed by growing things into a garden and moonlit. There was, too, the fairy.

Hedwig, in a soft white wrap over her dinner dress, was at the balustrade. The moon, which had robbed the flowers of their colors and made them ghosts of blossoms, had turned Hedwig into a pale white fairy with extremely frightened eyes. A very dignified fairy, too, although her heart thumped disgracefully. Having taken a most brazen step forward, she was now for taking two panicky ones back.

Therefore she pretended not to hear Nikky behind her, and was completely engrossed in the city lights.

So Hedwig intended to be remote, and Nikky meant to be firm and very, very loyal. Which shows how young and inexperienced they were. Because any one who knows even the beginnings of love knows that its victims suffer from an atrophy of both reason and conscience, and a hyperatrophy of the heart.

Whatever Nikky had intended, of obeying his promise to the letter, of putting his country before love, and love out of his life, failed him instantly. The Nikky, ardent-eyed and tender-armed, who crossed the roof and took her almost fiercely in his arms, was all lover—and twenty-three.

"Sweetheart!" he said. "Sweetest heart!"

When, having kissed her, he drew back a trifle for the sheer joy of again catching her to him, it was Hedwig who held out her arms to him.

"I couldn't bear it," she said simply. "I love you. I had to see you again. Just once."

If he had not entirely lost his head before, he lost it then. He stopped thinking, was content for a time that her arms were about his neck, and his arms about her, holding her close. They were tense, those arms of his, as though he would defy the world to take her away.

But, although he had stopped thinking, Hedwig had not. It is, at such times, always the woman who thinks. Hedwig, plotting against his honor and for his happiness and hers, was already, with her head on his breast, planning the attack. And, having a strategic position, she fired her first gun from there.

"Never let me go, Nikky," she whispered. "Hold me, always."

"Always!" said Nikky, valiantly and absurdly.

"Like this?"

"Like this," said Nikky, who was, like most lovers, not particularly original. He tightened his strong arms about her.

"They are planning such terrible things." Shell number two, and high explosive. "You won't let them take me from you, will you?"

"God!" said poor Nikky, and kissed her hair. "If we could only be like this always! Your arms, Hedwig—your sweet arms!" He kissed her arms.

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Gun number three now: "Tell me how much you love me."

"I—there are no words, darling. And I couldn't live long enough to tell you, if there were." Not bad that, for inarticulate Nikky.

"More than anybody else?"

He shook her a trifle, in his arms. "How can you?" he demanded, huskily. "More than anything in the world. More than life, or anything life can bring. More, God help me, than my country."

But his own words brought him up short. He released her, very gently, and drew back a step.

"You heard that?" he demanded. "And I mean it. It's incredible, Hedwig, but it is true."

"I want you to mean it," Hedwig replied, moving close to him, so that her soft draperies brushed him, the very scent of the faint perfume she used was in the air he breathed. "I want you to, because—Nikky, you are going to take me away, aren't you?"

Then, because she dared not give him time to think, she made her plea, rapid, girlish, rather incoherent, but understandable enough. They would go away together and be married. She had it all planned and some of it arranged. And then they would hide somewhere, and "—and always be together," she finished; tremulous with anxiety.

And Nikky? His pulses still beating at her nearness, his eyes on her upturned, despairing young face, turned to him for hope and comfort, what could he do? He took her in his arms again and soothed her, while she cried her heart out against his tunic. He said he would do anything to keep her from unhappiness, and that he would die before he let her go to Karl's arms. But if he had stopped thinking before, he was thinking hard enough then.

"To-night?" said Hedwig, raising a tear-stained face. "It is early. If we wait something will happen. I know it. They are so powerful, they can do anything."

After all, Nikky is poor stuff to try to make a hero of. He was so human, and so loving. And he was very, very young, which may perhaps be his excuse. As well confess his weakness and his temptation. He was tempted. Almost he felt he could not let her go, could not loosen his hold of her. Almost, not quite.

He put her away from him at last, after he had kissed her eyelids and her forehead, which was by way of renunciation. And then he folded his arms, which were treacherous and might betray him. After that, not daring to look at her, but with his eyes fixed on the irregular sky-line of the city roofs, he told her many things, of his promise to the King, of the danger, imminent now and very real, of his word of honor not to make love to her, which he had broken.

Hedwig listened, growing cold and still, and drawing away a little. She was suffering too much to be just. All she could see was that, for a matter of honor, and that debatable, she was to be sacrificed. This danger that all talked of—she had heard that for a dozen years, and nothing had come of it.

Nothing, that is, but her own sacrifice. She listened, even assented, as he plead against his own heart, treacherous arms still folded. And if she saw his arms and not his eyes, it was because she did not look up.

Half-way through his eager speech, however, she drew her light wrap about her and turned away. Nikky could not believe that she was going like that, without a word. But when she had disappeared through the window, he knew, and followed her. He caught her in Hubert's room, and drew her savagely into his arms.

But it was a passive, quiescent and trembling Hedwig who submitted, and then, freeing herself, went out through the door into the lights of the corridor. Nikky flung himself, face down, on a shrouded couch and lay there, his face buried in his arms.

Olga Loschek's last hope was gone.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Day of the Carnival

ON THE day of the carnival, which was the day before the beginning of Lent, Prince Ferdinand William Otto wakened early. The Palace still slept, and only the street-sweepers were about the streets. Prince Ferdinand William Otto sat up in bed and yawned. This was a special day, but at first he was too drowsy to remember.

Then he knew—the carnival! A delightful day, with the Place full of people in strange costumes, peasants, imps, jesters, who cut up capers on the grass in the Park, students who paraded and blew noisy horns,

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even horses decorated, and now and then a dog dressed as a dancer or a soldier.

He would have enjoyed dressing Toto in something or other. He decided to mention it to Nikky, and with a child's faith he felt that Nikky would, so to speak, come up to the scratch.

He yawned again, and began to feel hungry. He decided to get up and take his own bath. There was nothing like getting a good start for a gala day. And, since with the Crown Prince to decide was to do, which is not always a royal trait, he took his own bath, being very particular about his ears, and not at all particular about the rest of him. Then, no Oskar having yet appeared with fresh garments, he ducked back into bed again, quite bare as to his small body, and snuggled down in the sheets.

Lying there, he planned the day. There were to be no lessons except fencing, which could hardly be called a lesson at all, and as he now knew the Gettysburg Address, he meant to ask permission to recite it to his grandfather. To be quite sure of it, he repeated it to himself as he lay there:

"Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

"Free and equal," he said to himself. That rather puzzled him. Of course people were free, but they did not seem to be equal. In the summer, at the summer palace, he was only allowed to see a few children, because the others were what his Aunt Annunciata called "bourgeois." And there was in his mind also something Miss Braithwaite had said, after his escapade with the American boy.

"If you must have some child to play with," she had said, severely, "you could at least choose some one approximately your equal."

"But he *is* my equal," he had protested from the outraged depths of his democratic small heart.

"In birth," explained Miss Braithwaite.

"His father has a fine business," he had said, still rather indignant. "It makes a great deal of money. Not everybody can build a scenic railway and get it going right. Bobby said so."

Miss Braithwaite had been silent and obviously unconvinced. Yet this Mr. Lincoln, the American, had certainly said that all men were free and equal. It was very puzzling.

But, as the morning advanced, as clothed and fed the Crown Prince faced the new day, he began to feel a restraint, in the air. People came and went, his grandfather's Equerry, the Chancellor, the Lord Chamberlain, other gentlemen connected with the vast and intricate machinery of the Court, and even Hedwig, in a black frock, all these people came, and talked together, and eyed him when he was not looking. When they left they all bowed rather more than usual, except Hedwig, who kissed him, much to his secret annoyance.

Every one looked grave, and spoke in a low tone. Also there was something wrong with Nikky, who appeared not only grave, but rather stern and white. Considering that it was the day before Lent, and carnival time, Prince Ferdinand William Otto felt defrauded, rather like the occasion he had seen "The Flying Dutchman," which had turned out to be only a make-believe ship and did not fly at all. To add to the complications, Miss Braithwaite had a headache.

Nikky Larisch had arrived just as Hedwig departed, and even the Crown Prince had recognized something wrong. Nikky had stopped just inside the doorway, with his eyes rather desperately and hungrily on Hedwig, and Hedwig, who should have been scolded, according to Prince Otto, had passed him with the haughtiest sort of nod.

The Crown Prince witnessed the nod with wonder and alarm.

"We are all rather worried," he explained afterward to Nikky, to soothe his wounded pride. "My grandfather is not so well today. Hedwig is very unhappy."

"Yes," said Nikky miserably, "she does look unhappy."

"Now, when are we going out?" briskly demanded Prince Ferdinand William Otto. "I can hardly wait. I've seen the funniest people already. And dogs. Nikky I wonder if you could dress Toto, and let me see him somewhere."

"Out! You do not want to go out in that crowd, do you?"

"Why—am I not to go?"

His voice was suddenly quite shaky. He was, in a way, so inured to disappointments that he recognized the very tones in which they were usually announced. So he eyed Nikky with a searching glance, and saw there the thing he feared.

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"Well," he said resignedly. "I suppose I can see something from the windows. Only —I should like to have a really good time, occasionally." He was determined not to cry. "But there are usually a lot of people in the Place."

Then, remembering that his grandfather was very ill, he tried to forget his disappointment in a gift for him. Not burnt wood this time, but the drawing of a gun, which he explained as he worked, that he had invented. He drew behind the gun a sort of trestle, with little cars, not unlike the scenic railway, on which ammunition was delivered into the breech by something strongly resembling a coal-chute.

There was, after all, little to see from the windows. That part of the Place near the Palace remained empty and quiet, by order of the King's physicians. And although it was the carnival, and the streets were thronged with people, there was little of carnival air. The city waited.

Some loyal subjects, waited and grieved that the King lay dying. For, although the Palace had carefully repressed his condition, such things leak out, and there was the empty and silent Place to bear witness.

Others waited, too, but not in sorrow. And a certain percentage, the young and light-hearted, strutted the streets in fantastic costume, blew horns and threw confetti and fresh flowers, still dewy from the mountain slopes. The scenic railway was crowded with merry makers, and long lines of people stood waiting their turn at the ticket booth, where a surly old veteran, pinched with sleepless nights, sold them tickets and ignored their badinage. Family parties carrying baskets and wheeling babies in perambulators, took possession of the Park and littered it with paper bags. And among them, committing horrible crimes, dispatching whole families with a wooden gun from behind nearby trees and taking innumerable prisoners, went a small pirate in a black mask and a sash of scarlet ribbon, from which hung various deadly weapons, including a bread-knife, a meat-cleaver and a hatchet.

Attempts to make Tucker wear a mask having proven abortive, he was attired in a pirate flag of black, worn as a blanket, and having on it, in white muslin, what purported to be a skull and cross-bones, but which looked like the word "ox" with the O superimposed over the X.

Prince Ferdinand William Otto stood at his window and looked out. Something of resentment showed itself in the lines of his figure. There was, indeed rebellion in his heart. This was a real day, a day of days, and no one seemed to care that he was missing it. Miss Braithwaite looked drawn about the eyes, and considered carnivals rather common, and certainly silly. And Nikky looked drawn about the mouth, and did not care to play.

Rebellion was dawning in the soul of the Crown Prince, not the impassive revolt of the "Flying Dutchman" and things which only pretended to be, like the imitation ship and the women who were not really spinning. The same rebellion, indeed, which had set old Adelbert against the King and turned him traitor, a rebellion against needless disappointment, a protest for happiness.

Old Adelbert, forbidden to march in his new uniform, the Crown Prince, forbidden his liberty and shut in a gloomy Palace, were blood-brothers in revolt.

Not that Prince Ferdinand William Otto knew he was in revolt. At first it consisted only of a consideration of his promise to the Chancellor. But while there had been an understanding, there had been no actual promise, had there?

Late in the morning Nikky took him to the roof. "We can't go out, old man," Nikky said to him, rather startled to discover the unhappiness in the boy's face. "But I've found a place where we can see more than we can here. Suppose we try it."

"Why can't we go out? I've always gone before."

"Well," Nikky temporized, "they've made a rule. They make a good many rules, you know. But they said nothing about the roof."

"The roof!"

"The roof. The thing that covers us and keeps out the weather. The roof, Highness." Nikky alternated between formality and the other extreme with the boy.

"It slants, doesn't it?" observed his Highness, doubtfully.

"Part of it is quite flat. We can take a ball up there, and get some exercise while we're about it."

As a matter of fact, Nikky was not altogether unselfish. He would visit the roof again, where for terrible, wonderful moments he had held Hedwig in his arms. Or

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"MIKRY, YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE ME AWAY, AREN'T YOU?"

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a pilgrimage, indeed, like that of the Crown Prince to Etzel, Nikky would visit his shrine.

So they went to the roof. They went through silent corridors, past quiet rooms where the suite waited and spoke in whispers, past the very door of the chamber where the Council sat in session, and where reports were coming in, hour by hour, as to the condition of things outside. Past the apartment of the Archduchess Annunciata, where Hilda, released from lessons, was trying the effect of jet earrings against her white skin; and the Archduchess herself was sitting by her fire, and contemplating the necessity for flight. In her closet was a small bag, already packed in case of necessity. Indeed, more persons than the Archduchess Annunciata had so prepared. Miss Braithwaite, for instance, had spent a part of the night over a traveling-case containing a small boy's outfit, and had wept as she worked, which was the reason for her headache.

The roof proved quite wonderful. One could see the streets crowded with people, could hear the soft blare of distant horns.

"The scenic railway is in that direction," observed the Crown Prince, leaning on the balustrade. "If there were no buildings we could see it."

"Right here," Nikky was saying to himself. "At this very spot. She held out her arms, and I——"

"It looks very interesting," said Prince Ferdinand William Otto. "Of course we can't see the costumes, but it is better than nothing."

"I kissed her," Nikky was thinking, his heart swelling under his very best tunic. "Her head was on my breast, and I kissed her. Last of all, I kissed her eyes—her lovely eyes."

"If I fell off here," observed the Crown Prince in a meditative voice, "I would be smashed to a jelly, like the child at the Crystal Palace."

"But now she hates me," said Nikky's heart, and dropped about the distance of three buttons. "She hates me. I saw it in her eyes this morning. God!"

"We might as well play ball now."

Prince Ferdinand William Otto turned away from the parapet with a sigh. This strange quiet that filled the Palace seemed to have attacked Nikky too. Otto hated quiet.

They played ball, and the Crown Prince took a lesson in curves. But on his third attempt, he described such a compound curve that the ball disappeared over an adjacent part of the roof, and although Nikky did some blood-curdling climbing along gutters, it could not be found.

It was then that the Majordomo, always a marvelous figure in crimson and gold, and never seen without white gloves—the Majordomo bowed in a window, and observed that if His Royal Highness pleased, His Royal Highness's luncheon was served.

In the shrouded room inside the windows, however, His Royal Highness paused and looked around.

"I've been here before," he observed. "These were my father's rooms. My mother lived here too. When I am older, perhaps I can have them. It would be convenient on account of my practising curves on the roof. But I should need a number of balls."

He was rather silent on his way back to the schoolroom. But once he looked up rather wistfully at Nikky.

"If they were living," he said, "I am pretty sure they would take me out to-day."

Olga Loschek had found the day one of terror. Annunciata had demanded her attendance all morning, had weakened strangely and demanded fretfully to be comforted.

"I have been a bad daughter," she would say. "It was my nature. I was warped and soured by wretchedness."

"But you have not been a bad daughter," the Countess would protest, for the thousandth time. "You have done your duty faithfully. You have stayed here, when many another would have been traveling on the Riviera, or——"

"It was no sacrifice," said Annunciata, in her peevish voice. "I loathe traveling. And now I am being made to suffer for all I have done. He will die, and the rest of us—what will happen to us?" She shivered.

The Countess would take the cue, would enlarge on the precautions for safety, on the uselessness of fear, on the popularity of the Crown Prince. And Annunciata, for a time at least, would relax. In her new remorse, she made frequent visits to the sick-room, passing, a long thin figure, clad in black, through lines of bowing gentlemen, to stand by the bed and wring her hands. But the old King did not even know she was there.

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The failure of her plan as to Nikky and Hedwig was known to the Countess the night before. Hedwig had sent for her and faced her in her boudoir, very white and calm.

"He refuses," she said. "There is nothing more to do."

"Refuses!"

"He has promised not to leave Otto."

Olga Loschek had been incredulous, at first. It was not possible. Men in love did not do these things. It was not possible, that, after all, she had failed. When she realized it she would have broken out in bitter protest, but Hedwig's face warned her.

"He is right, of course," Hedwig had said. "You and I were wrong, Countess. There is nothing to do—or say."

And the Countess had taken her defeat quietly, with burning eyes and a throat dry with excitement.

"I am sorry, Highness," she said from the doorway. "I had only hoped to save you from unhappiness. That is all. And, as you say, there is nothing to be done." So she had gone away and faced the night, and the day which was to follow.

The plot was arranged, to the smallest detail. The King, lived now only so long as it was decreed he should live, would, in mid-afternoon, commence to sink. The entire Court would be gathered in ante-rooms and salons near his apartments. In his rooms the Crown Prince would be kept, awaiting the summons to the throne-room, where, on the King's death, the regency would be declared, and the Court would swear fealty to the new King, Otto the Ninth.

By arrangement with the captain of the Palace guard, who was one of the Committee of Ten, the sentries before the Crown Prince's door were to be of the Revolutionary party. Mettlich would undoubtedly be with the King. Remained then, to be reckoned with, only the Prince's personal servants, Miss Braithwaite, and Nikky Larisch.

The servants offered little difficulty. At that hour, four o'clock, probably only the valet Oskar would be on duty, and his station was at the end of a corridor, separated by two doors from the schoolroom. It was planned that the two men who were to secure the Crown Prince were to wear the Palace livery, and to come with a message that the Crown Prince was to accompany them. Then instead of going to the wing where the Court was gathered, they would go up to Hubert's rooms, and from there to the roof and the secret passage.

Two obstacles were left for the Countess to cope with, and this was her part of the work. She had already a plan for Miss Braithwaite. But Nikky Larisch?

Over that problem, during the long night hours, Olga Loschek worked. It would be possible to overcome Nikky, of course. There would be four men, with the sentries, against him. But that would mean struggle and an alarm. It was the plan to achieve the abduction quietly, so quietly that for perhaps an hour—they hoped for an hour—there would be no alarm. Some time they must have, enough to make the long journey through the underground passage. Otherwise the opening at the gate would be closed, and the party caught like rats in a hole.

The necessity for planning served one purpose, at least. It kept her from thinking. Possibly it saved her reason, for there were times during that last night, when Olga Loschek was not far from madness. At dawn, long after Hedwig had forgotten her unhappiness in sleep, the Countess went wearily to bed. She had dismissed Minna hours before, and as she stood before her mirror, loosening her heavy hair, she saw that all that was of youth and loveliness in her had died in the night. A determined scornful and hard-eyed woman, she went drearily to bed.

During the early afternoon, the Chancellor visited the Crown Prince. Waiting and watching had made inroads on him, too, but he assumed a sort of heavy jocularity for the boy's benefit.

"No lessons, eh?" he said. "Then there have been no paper balls for the tutors' eyes, eh?"

"I never did that but once, sir," said Prince Ferdinand William Otto gravely.

"So! Once only!"

"And I did that, because he was always looking at Hedwig's picture."

The Chancellor eyed the picture. "I should be the last to condemn him for that," he said, and glanced at Nikky.

"We must get the lad out somewhere, for some air," he observed. "It is not good to keep him shut up like this." He turned to the Crown Prince. "In a day or so," he said, "we shall all go to the summer palace. You would like that, eh?"

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"Will my grandfather be able to go?"

The Chancellor sighed. Yes," he said, "I—he will go to the country, also. He has loved it very dearly."

He went, shortly after three o'clock. And, because he was restless and uneasy, he made a round of the Palace, and of the guards. Before he returned to his vigil outside the King's bedroom, he stood for a moment by a window and looked out. Evidently rumors of the King's condition had crept out, in spite of their caution. The Place, kept free of murmurs by the police, was filling slowly with people; people who took up positions on benches, under the trees and even sitting on the curb of the street. An orderly and silent crowd it seemed, of the better class. Here and there he saw police agents in plain clothes, impassive but watchful, on the lookout for the first cry of treason.

An hour or two, or three—three at the most—and the fate of the Palace would lie in the hands of that crowd. He could but lead the boy to the balcony, and await the result.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

"Fifteen Men On a Dead Man's Chest."

MISS Braithwaite was asleep on the couch in her sitting-room, deeply asleep, so that when Prince Ferdinand William Otto changed the cold cloth on her head, she did not even move. The Countess Loschek had brought her some medicine.

"It cured her very quickly," said the Crown Prince, shuffling the cards with clumsy fingers. He and Nikky were playing a game, in which matches represented money. The Crown Prince had won nearly all of them and was quite pink with excitement. "It's my deal, isn't it? When she goes to sleep like that, she nearly always wakens up much better. She's very sound asleep."

Nikky played absently, and lost the game. The Crown Prince triumphantly scooped up the rest of the matches. "We've had rather a nice day," he observed. "Even if we didn't go out. Shall we divide them again, and start all over?"

Nikky, however, proclaimed himself hopelessly beaten and a bad loser. So the Crown Prince put away the cards, which belonged to Miss Braithwaite, and with which she played solitaire in the evenings. Then he lounged to the window, his hands in his pockets. There was something on his mind, which the Chancellor's reference to Hedwig's picture had recalled. Something he wished to say to Nikky, without looking at him.

So he cleared his throat, and looked out the window, and said, very casually:

"Hilda says that Hedwig is going to get married."

"So I hear, Highness."

"She doesn't seem to be very happy about it. She's crying, most of the time."

It was Nikky's turn to clear his throat. "Marriage is a serious matter," he said. "It is not to be gone into lightly."

"Once, when I asked you about marriage, you said marriage was when two people loved each other, and wanted to be together the rest of their lives."

"Well," hedged Nikky, "that *is* the idea, rather."

"I should think," said Prince Ferdinand William Otto, slightly red, "that you would marry her yourself."

Nikky being beyond speech for an instand and looking, had His Royal Highness but seen him, very tragic and somewhat rigid, the Crown Prince went on:

"She's a very nice girl," he said, "I think she would make a good wife."

There was something of reproach in his tone. He had confidently planned that Nikky would marry Hedwig, and that they could all live on forever in the Palace. But, the way things were going, Nikky might marry anybody, and go away to live, and he would lose him.

"Yes," said Nikky, in a strange voice, "she—I am sure she would make a good wife."

At which Prince Ferdinand William Otto turned and looked at him. "I wish you would marry her yourself," he said with his nearest approach to impatience. "I think she'd be willing. I'll ask her, if you want me to."

Half-past three, then, and Nikky trying to explain, within the limits of the boy's understanding of life, his position. Members of royal families, he said, looking far away, over the child's head, had to do many things for the good of the country. And marrying was one of them. Something he told of old Mettlich's creed of prosperity for the land he gave, something

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of his own hopelessness, too, without knowing it. He sat, bent forward, his hands swung between his knees, and tried to visualize, for Otto's understanding and his own heartache, the results of such a marriage.

Some of it the boy grasped. A navy, ships, a railroad to the sea, those he could understand. Treaties were beyond his comprehension. And, with a child's singleness of idea, he returned to the marriage.

"I'm sure she doesn't care about it," he said at last. "If I were king I would not let her do it. And—" he sat very erect and swung his short legs—"when I grow up, I shall fight for a navy, if I want one, and I shall marry whoever I like."

At a quarter to four Olga Loschek was announced. She made the courtesy inside the door that Palace ceremonial demanded, and inquired for the governess. Prince Ferdinand William Otto, who had risen at her entrance, offered to see if she still slept.

"I think you are a very good doctor," he said, smiling, and went out to Miss Braithwaite's sitting-room.

It was then that Olga Loschek played the last card, and won. She moved quickly to Nikky's side.

"I have a message for you," she said.

A light leaped into Nikky's eyes. "For me?"

"Do you know where my boudoir is?"

"I—yes, Countess."

"If you will go there at once and wait, some one will see you there as soon as possible." She put her hand on his arm. "Don't be foolish and proud," she said. "She is sorry—about last night, and she is very unhappy."

The light faded out of Nikky's eyes. She was unhappy and he could do nothing. They had a way, in the Palace, of binding one's hands and leaving one helplesss. He could not even go to her.

"I can not go, Countess," he said. "She must understand. To-day, of all days——"

"You mean that you can not leave the Crown Prince?" She shrugged her shoulders. "You too! Never have I seen so many faint hearts, such rolling eyes, such shaking knees! And for what! Because a few timid souls see a danger that does not exist."

"I think it does exist," said Nikky obstinately.

"I am to take the word to her, then, that you will not come?"

"That I can not."

"You are a very foolish boy," said the Countess, watching him. "And since you are so fearful, I myself will remain here. There are sentries at the doors, and a double guard everywhere. What, in the name of all that is absurd, can possibly happen?"

That was when she won. For Nikky, who has never been, in all this history, anything of a hero, and all of the romantic and loving boy, Nikky wavered and fell.

When Prince Ferdinand William Otto returned, it was with the word that Miss Braithwaite still slept, and that she looked very comfortable, Nikky was gone, and the Countess stood by a window, holding to the sill to support her shaking body.

It was done. The boy was in her hands. There was left only to deliver him to those who, even now, were on the way. Nikky was safe. He would wait in her boudoir, and Hedwig would not come. She had sent no message. She was, indeed, at that moment a part of one of those melancholy family groups which the world over, in palace or peasant's hut, await the coming of death.

Prince Ferdinand William Otto chatted. He got out the picture-frame for Hedwig, which was finished now, with the exception of burning his initials in the lower left-hand corner. After inquiring politely if the smell of burning would annoy her, the Crown Prince drew a rather broken-backed F, a weak-kneed W and an irregular O in the corner and proceeded to burn them in. He sat bent over the desk, the very tip of his tongue protruding, and worked conscientiously and carefully. After each letter he burned a dot.

Suddenly, Olga Loschek became panic-stricken. She could not stay and see this thing out. Let them follow her and punish her. She could not. She had done her part. The governess lay in a drugged sleep. A turn of the key, and the door to the passage beyond which Oskar waited would be closed off. Let follow what must, she would not see it.

The boy still bent over his work. She wandered about the room, casually, as if examining the pictures on the wall. She stopped, for a bitter moment, before Hedwig's photograph, and for a shaken one, before those of Prince Hubert and his wife.

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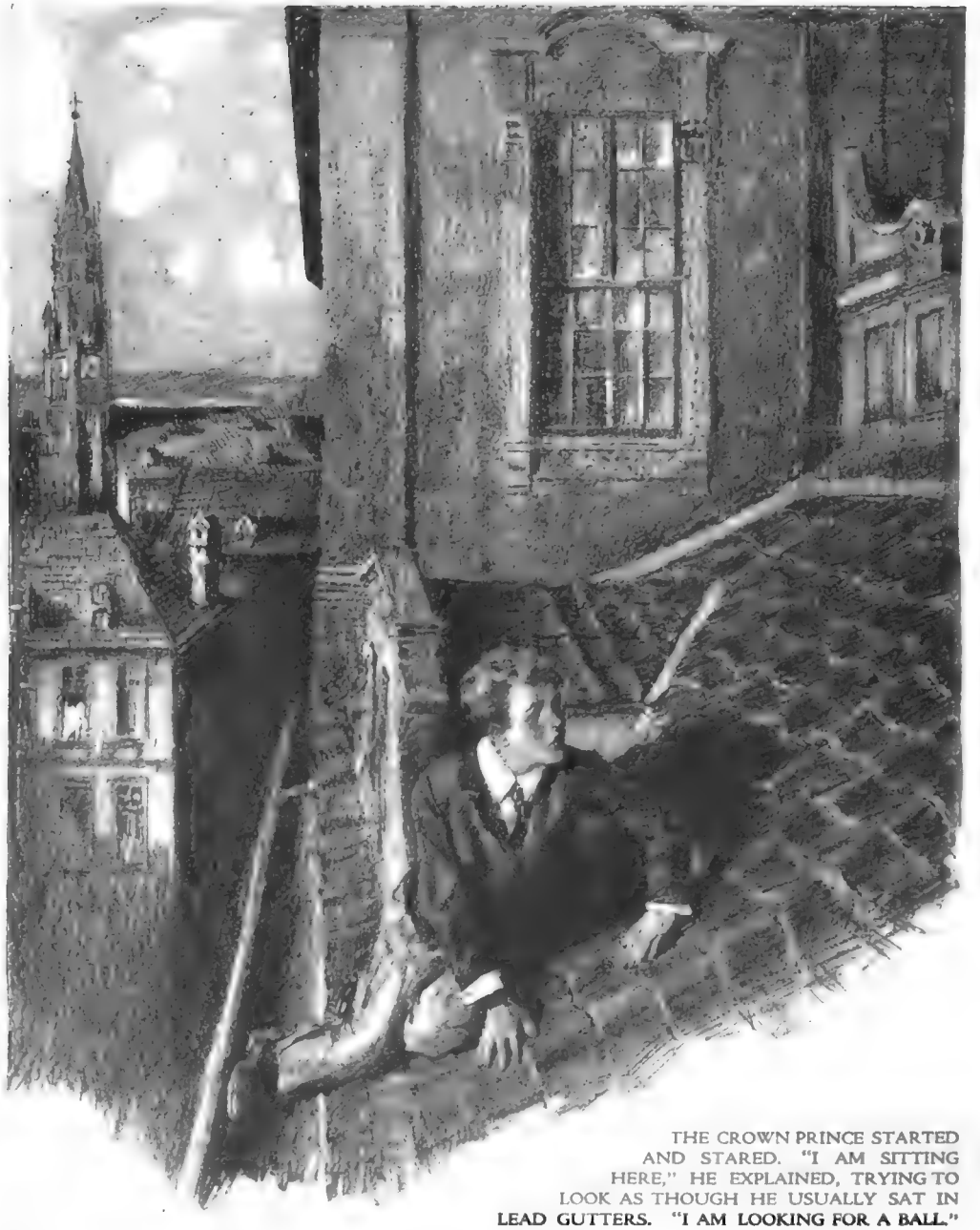

THE CROWN PRINCE STARTED AND STARED. "I AM SITTING HERE," HE EXPLAINED, TRYING TO LOOK AS THOUGH HE USUALLY SAT IN LEAD GUTTERS. "I AM LOOKING FOR A BALL."

Then she turned the key, and shut Oskar safely away.

"Highness," she said, "Lieutenant Larisch will be here in a moment. Will you permit me to go?"

Otto was off his chair in an instant. "Certainly," he said, his mind still on the O which he was shading.

Old habit was strong in the Countess. Although the boy's rank was numbered by moments, although his life was possibly to be counted by hours, she turned at the doorway and swept him a courtesy. Then she went out, and closed the door behind her.

The two sentries stood outside. They

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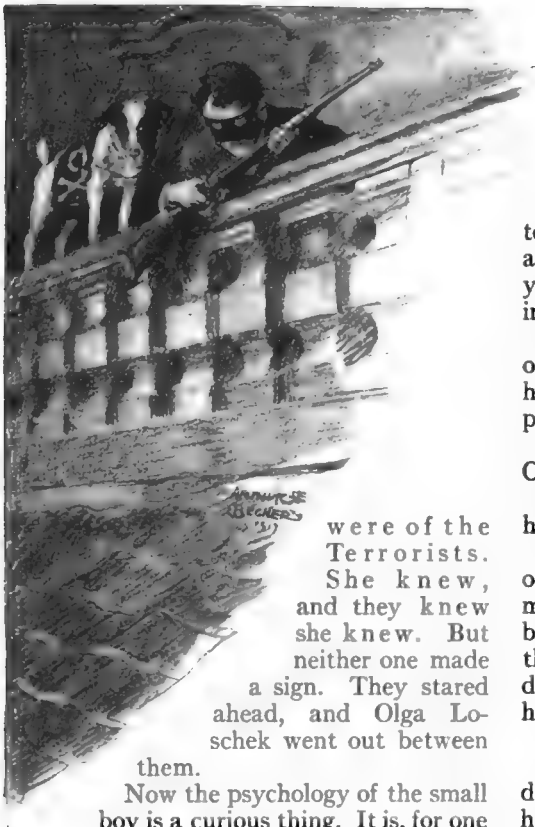

were of the Terrorists. She knew, and they knew she knew. But neither one made a sign. They stared ahead, and Olga Loschek went out between them.

Now the psychology of the small boy is a curious thing. It is, for one thing, retentive. Ideas become, given time, obsessions. And obsessions are likely to lead to action.

The Crown Prince Ferdinand William Otto was only a small boy, for all his title and dignity. And suddenly he felt lonely. Left alone, he returned to his expectations for the day, and compared them with the facts. He remembered other carnivals, with his carriage moving through the streets, and people showering him with fresh flowers. He rather glowed at the memory. Then he recalled that the Chancellor had said he needed fresh air.

Something occurred to him, something which combined fresh air with action, yet kept to the letter of his promise—or was there a promise?—not to leave the Palace.

The idea pleased him. It set him to smiling, and his bright hair to quivering with excitement. It was nothing less than to go up on the roof and find the ball. Nikky would be surprised, having failed himself. He would have to be very careful, having in mind the fate of that unlucky child at the Crystal Palace. And he would have to hurry. Nikky would be sure to return soon.

He opened the door onto the great corridor, and stepped out, saluting the sentries, as he always did.

"I'll be back in a moment," he informed them. He was always on terms of great friendliness with the guard, and he knew these men by sight. "Are you going to be stationed here now?" he inquired, pleasantly.

The two guards were at a loss. But one of them, who had a son of his own, and hated the whole business, saluted and replied that he knew not.

"I hope you are," said Ferdinand William Otto, and went on.

The sentries regarded one another. "Let him go!" said the one who was a father.

The other one moved uneasily. "Our orders cover no such contingency," he muttered. "And besides, he will come back." He bore a strong resemblance to the boy who, in the riding-school, had dusted the royal hearse. "I hope to God he does not come back," he said stonily.

Five minutes to four.

The Crown Prince hurried. The corridors were almost empty. Here and there he met servants, who stood stiff against the wall until he had passed. On the marble staircase, leading up, he met no one, nor on the upper floor. He was quite warm with running, and he paused in his father's suite to mop his face. Then he opened a window and went out on the roof. It seemed very large, and empty now, and the afternoon sun, sinking low, threw shadows across it. Also, from the balustrade, it looked extremely far to the ground.

Nevertheless, although his heart beat a trifle fast, he was still determined. A climb which Nikky with his long legs had achieved in a leap, took him up to a chimney. Below, it seemed a long way below, was the gutter. There was a very considerable slant. If one sat down, like Nikky, and slid, and did not slide over the edge, one should fetch up in the gutter.

He felt a trifle dizzy. But Nikky's theory was, that if one is afraid to do a thing, better to do it and get over being afraid.

"I was terribly afraid of a bayonet attack," Nikky had observed, "until I was in one. The next one I rather enjoyed!"

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So the Crown Prince sat down on the sloping roof behind the chimney, and gathered his legs under him for a slide.

Then he heard a door open, and footsteps. Very careful footsteps. He was quite certain Nikky had followed him. But there were cautious voices, two, and neither was Nikky's. It occurred to Prince Ferdinand William Otto that a good many people, certainly including Miss Braithwaite, would not approve of either his situation or his position. Miss Braithwaite was particularly particular about positions.

So he sat still beside the chimney, well shielded by the evergreens in tubs until the voices and the footsteps were gone. Then he took all his courage in his hands, and slid. Well for him that the ancient builders of the Palace had been reckless with lead, that the gutter was both wide and deep. Well for Nikky, too, waiting in the boudoir below and hard driven between love and anxiety.

The Crown Prince, unaccustomed to tiles, turned over half-way down, and rolled. He brought up with a jerk in the gutter, quite safe but extremely frightened. And the horrid memory of the Crystal Palace child filled his mind, to the exclusion of everything else. He sat there for quite a few minutes. There was no ball in sight, and the roof looked even steeper from this point.

Being completely self-engrossed, therefore, he did not see that the roof had another visitor. Had two visitors, as a matter of fact. One of them wore a blanket with a white O over a white X on it, and the other wore a mask, and considerable kitchen cutlery fastened to his belt. They had come out of a small door in the turret and were very much at ease. They leaned over the parapet and admired the view. They strutted about the flat roof, and sang, at least one of them sang a very strange refrain, which was something about fifteen men on a dead man's chest, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum. And then they climbed on one of the garden chairs and looked over the expanse of the roof, which was when they saw Prince Ferdinand William Otto and gazed at him.

"Gee whiz!" said the larger pirate, through his mask. "What are you doing there?"

The Crown Prince started, and stared. "I am sitting here," explained the Crown Prince, trying to look as though he usually sat in lead gutters. "I am looking for a ball."

"You're looking for a fall, I guess," observed the pirate. "You don't remember me, kid, do you?"

"I can't see your face, but I know your voice." His voice trembled with excitement.

"Lemme give you a hand," said the pirate, whipping off his mask. "You make me nervous, sitting there. You've got a nerve, you have."

The Crown Prince looked gratified. "I don't need any assistance, thank you," he said. "Perhaps, now I'm here, I'd better look for the ball."

"I wouldn't bother about the old ball," said the pirate, rather uneasily for an old sea-dog. "You better get back to a safe place. Say, what made you pretend that our railway made you nervous?"

Prince Ferdinand William Otto climbed up the tiles, trying to look as though tiles were his native habitat. The pirates both regarded him with admiration, as he dropped beside them.

"How did you happen to come here?" asked the Crown Prince. "Did you lose your aeroplane up here?"

"We came on business," said the pirate importantly. "Two of the enemy entered our cave. We were guarding it from the underbrush, and saw them go in. We trailed them. They must die!"

"Really—die?"

"Of course. Death to those who defy us."

"Death to those who defy us!" repeated the Crown Prince, enjoying himself hugely, and quite ready for bloodshed.

"Look here, Dick Deadeye," said the larger pirate to the smaller, who stood gravely at attention, "I think he belongs to our crew. What say, old pal?"

Dick Deadeye wagged his tail.

Some two minutes later, the Crown Prince of Livonia, having sworn the pirate oath of no quarter, except to women and children, was on his way to the pirate cave.

He was not running away. He was not disobedient. He was breaking no promises. Because, from the moment he saw the two confederates, and particularly from the moment he swore the delightful oath, his past was wiped away. There was, in his consciousness, no Palace, no

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grandfather, no Miss Braithwaite, even no Nikky. There was only a boy and a dog, and a pirate den awaiting him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The Paper Crown

STRANGE that the old Palace roof should, in close succession, have seen Nikky forgetting his promise to the Chancellor, and Otto forgetting that he was not to run away. Strange places, roofs—abiding places, since long ago, of witches.

"How'd you happen to be in that gutter?" Bobby demanded, as they started down the staircase in the wall. "Watch out, son, it's pretty steep."

"I was getting a ball."

"Is this your house?"

"Well, I live here," temporized Prince Ferdinand William Otto. A terrible thought came to him. Suppose this American boy, who detested kings and princes, should learn who he was!

"It looks like a big place. Is it a barracks?"

"No." He hesitated. "But there are a good many soldiers here. I—I never saw these steps before."

"I should think not," boasted Bobby. "I discovered them. I guess nobody else in the world knows about them. I put up a flag at the bottom and took possession. They're mine."

"Really!" said Prince Ferdinand William Otto, quite delighted. He would never have thought of such a thing.

A door of iron bars at the foot of the long flight of steps—there were four of them—stood open. Here daylight, which had been growing fainter, entirely ceased. And here Bobby, having replaced his mask, placed an air-rifle over his shoulder, and lighted a candle and held it out to the Crown Prince.

"You can carry it," he said. "Only don't let it drip on you. You'll spoil your clothes." There was a faintly scornful note in his voice, and Ferdinand William Otto was quick to hear it.

"I don't care at all about my clothes," he protested. And to prove it he deliberately tilted the candle and let a thin stream of paraffin run down his short jacket.

"You're a pretty good sport," Bobby observed. And from that time on he addressed His Royal Highness as "old sport."

"Walk faster, old sport," he would say. "That candle's pretty short, and we've got a long way to go." Or—"Say, old sport, I'll make you a mask like this, if you like. I made this one."

When they reached the old dungeon the candle was about done. There was only time to fashion another black mask out of a piece of cloth that bore a strange resemblance to a black waistcoat. The Crown Prince donned this with a wildly beating heart. Never in all his life had he been so excited. Even Dick Deadeye was interested, and gave up his scenting of the strange footsteps that he had followed through the passage, to watch the proceedings.

"We can get another candle, and come back and cook something," said the senior pirate, tying the mask on with pieces of brown string. "It gets pretty smoky, but I can cook, you'd better believe."

So this wonderful boy could cook, also! The Crown Prince had never met any one with so many varied attainments. He gazed through the eyeholes, which were rather too far apart, in rapt admiration.

"As you haven't got a belt," Bobby said, generously. "I'll give you the rifle. Ever hold a gun?"

"Oh, yes," said the Crown Prince. He did not explain that he had been taught to shoot on the rifle-range of his own regiment, and had won quite a number of medals. He possessed, indeed, quite a number of small but very perfect guns.

With the last gasp of the candle, the children prepared to depart. The senior pirate had already forgotten the two men he had trailed through the passage, and was eager to get outdoors.

"Ready!" he said. "Now remember, old sport, we are pirates. No quarter, except to women and children. Shoot every man."

"Even if he is unarmed?" inquired the Crown Prince, who had also studied strategy and tactics, and felt that an unarmed man should be taken prisoner.

"Sure. We don't really shoot them, silly. Now. Get in step. 'Fifteen men on a dead man's chest. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum.'"

They marched up the steps and out through the opening at the top. If there were any who watched, outside the encircling growth of evergreens, they were not

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on the lookout for two small boys and a dog. And, as became pirates, the children made a stealthy exit.

Then began, for the Crown Prince, such a day of joy as he had never known before. Even the Land of Delight faded before this new bliss of stalking from tree to tree, of killing unsuspecting citizens who sat on rugs on the ground and ate sausages and little cakes. Here and there, where a party had moved on, they salvaged a bit of food, the heel of a loaf, one of the small country apples. Shades of the court physician, under whose direction the Crown Prince was daily fed a carefully balanced ration!

When they were weary, they stretched out on the ground, and the Crown Prince, whose bed was nightly dried with a warming pan for fear of dampness, wallowed blissfully on earth still soft with the melting frosts of the winter. He grew muddy and dirty. He had had no hat, of course, and his bright hair hung over his forehead in moist strands. Now and then he drew a long breath of sheer happiness.

Around them circled the gaiety of the carnival, bands of students in white, with the tall peaked caps of pierrots. Here and there was a scarlet figure, a devil with horns, who watched the crowd warily. A dog with the tulle petticoats of a dancer tied around it and a great bow on its neck, made friends with Dick Deadeye, alias Tucker, and joined the group.

But, as dusk descended, the crowd gradually dispersed, some to supper, but some to gather in the Place and in the streets around the Palace. For the rumor that the King was dying would not down.

At last the senior pirate consulted a large nickel watch.

"Gee, it's almost supper time," he said.

Prince Ferdinand William Otto consulted his own watch, the one with the inscription: "To Ferdinand William Otto, from his grandfather, on the occasion of his taking his first communion."

"Why can't you come home to supper with me?" asked the senior pirate. "Would your folks kick up a row?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Would your family object?"

"There is only one person who would mind," reflected the Crown Prince, aloud, "and she will be angry anyhow. I—do you think your mother will be willing?"

"Willing? Sure she will! My governess—but I'll fix her. She's a German, and they're always cranky. Anyhow, it's my birthday. I'm always allowed a guest on birthdays."

So home together, gaily chatting, went the two children, along the cobble-paved streets of the ancient town, past old churches that had been sacked and pillaged by the very ancestors of one of them, taking short cuts through narrow passages that twisted and wormed their way between, and sometimes beneath, century-old stone houses; across the flower-market, where faint odors of dying violets and crushed lilies-of-the-valley still clung to the bare wooden booths; and so, finally, to the door of a tall building where, from the concierge's room beside the entrance, came a reek of stewing garlic.

Neither of the children had noticed the unwonted silence of the streets, which had, almost suddenly, succeeded the noise of the carnival. What few passers-by they had seen had been hurrying in the direction of the Palace. Twice they had passed soldiers, with lanterns, and once one had stopped and flashed a light on them.

"Well, old sport?" said Bobby in English. "Anything you can do for me?"

The soldier had passed on, muttering at the insolence of American children. The two youngsters laughed consumedly at the witticism. They were very happy, the lonely, little American boy and the lonely little prince—happy from sheer gregariousness, from the satisfaction of that strongest of human inclinations, next to love—the social instinct.

The concierge was out. His niece admitted them, and went back to her interrupted cooking. The children hurried up the winding stone staircase, with its iron rail and its gas lantern, to the second floor.

In the sitting-room, the sour-faced governess was darning a hole in a small stocking. She was as close as possible to the green-tile stove, and she was looking very unpleasant; for the egg-shaped darner only slipped through the hole, which was a large one. With an irritable gesture she took off her slipper, and, putting one coarse-stockinged foot on the fender, proceeded to darn by putting the slipper into the stocking and working over it.

Things looked unpropitious. The Crown Prince ducked behind Bobby.

The Fräulein looked at the clock. "You

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are fifteen minutes late," she snapped, and bit the darning thread—not with rage, but because she had forgotten her scissors.

"I'm sorry, but you see——"

"Whom have you there?"

The Prince cowered. She looked quite like his grandfather when his tutor's reports had been unfavorable.

"A friend of mine," said Bobby, not a whit daunted.

The governess put down the stocking and rose. In so doing, she caught her first real glimpse of Ferdinand William Otto, and she staggered back.

"Holy saints!" she said, and went white. Then she stared at the boy, and her color came back. "For a moment," she muttered "—but no. He is not so tall, nor has he the manner. Yes, he is much smaller!"

Which proves that, whether it wears it or not, royalty is always measured to the top of a crown.

In the next room, Bobby's mother was arranging candles on a birthday cake in the center of the table. Pepy had iced the cake herself, and had forgotten one of the "b's" in "Bobby" so that the cake really read: Boby—XII.

However, it looked delicious, and inside had been baked a tiny black china doll and a new American penny, with Abraham Lincoln's head on it. The penny was for good fortune, but the doll was a joke of Pepy's, Bobby being aggressively masculine.

Bobby, having passed the outpost, carried the rest of the situation by assault. He rushed into the dining-room and kissed his mother, with one eye on the cake.

"Mother, here's company to supper! Oh, look at the cake! 'B-O-B-Y'! *Mother!* that's awful!"

Mrs. Thorpe looked at the cake. "Poor Pepy," she said. "Suppose she had made it 'Booby?'" Then she saw Ferdinand William Otto, and went over, somewhat puzzled, with her hand out. "I am very glad Bobby brought you," she said. "He has so few little friends——"

Then she stopped, for the Prince had brought his heels together sharply, and, bending over her hand, had kissed it, exactly as he kissed his Aunt Annunciata's when he went to have tea with her. Mrs. Thorpe was fairly startled, not at the kiss, but at the grace with which the tribute was rendered.

Then she looked down, and it restored her composure to find that Ferdinand William Otto, too, had turned eyes toward the cake. He was, after all, only a hungry small boy. With quick tenderness she stooped and kissed him gravely on the forehead.

Caresses were strange to Ferdinand William Otto. His warm little heart leaped and pounded. At that moment, he would have died for her!

Mr. Thorpe came home a little late. He kissed Bobby twelve times, and one to grow on. He shook hands absently with the visitor, and gave the Fräulein the evening paper—an extravagance on which he insisted, although one could read the news for nothing by going to the café on the corner. Then he drew his wife aside.

"Look here!" he said. "Don't tell Bobby—no use exciting him, and of course it's not our funeral. Anyhow—but there's a report that the Crown Prince has been kidnaped. And that's not all. The old King is dying!"

"How terrible!"

"Worse than that. The old King gone and no Crown Prince! It may mean almost any sort of trouble. I've closed up at the Park for the night. The whole town is packed in front of the Palace." His arm around his wife, he looked through the doorway to where Bobby and Ferdinand were counting the candles. "It's made me think pretty hard," he said. "Bobby mustn't go around alone the way he's been doing. All Americans here are considered millionaires. If the Crown Prince could go, think how easy——"

His arm tightened around his wife, and together they went in to the birthday feast. Ferdinand William Otto was hungry. He ate eagerly—chicken, fruit compote, potato salad—again shades of the court physicians, who fed him at night a balanced ration of milk, egg, and zwieback! Bobby also ate busily, and conversation languished.

Then the moment came when, the first cravings appeased, they sat back in their chairs while Pepy cleared the table and brought in a knife to cut the cake. Mr. Thorpe had excused himself for a moment. Now he came back, with a bottle wrapped in a newspaper, and sat down again.

"I thought," he said, "as this is a real occasion, not exactly Robert's coming of age, but marking his arrival at years of discretion, the period when he ceases to

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be a small boy and becomes a big one, we might drink a toast to it."

"Howard!" objected the big boy's mother.

"A teaspoon each, honey," he begged. "It changes it from a mere supper to a festivity."

He poured a few drops of wine into the children's glasses, and filled them up with water. Then he filled the others, and sat smiling, this big young man, who had brought his loved ones across the sea, and was trying to make them happy up a flight of stone stairs, above a concierge's bureau that smelled of garlic.

"First," he said. "I believe it is customary to toast the King. Friends, I give you the good King and brave soldier, Ferdinand of Livonia."

They stood up to drink it, and even Pepy had a glass.

Ferdinand William Otto was on his feet first. He held his glass up in his right hand, and his eyes shone. He knew what to do. He had seen the King's health drunk any number of times.

"To His Majesty, Ferdinand of Livonia," he said solemnly. "God keep the King!"

Over their glasses, Mrs. Thorpe's eyes met her husband's. How they trained their children here!

But Ferdinand William Otto had not finished. "I give you," he said, in his clear treble, holding his glass, "the President of the United States—the President!"

"The President!" said Mr. Thorpe.

They drank again, except the Fräulein, who disapproved of children being made much of, and only pretended to sip her wine.

"Bobby," said his mother, with a catch in her voice, "haven't you something to suggest—as a toast?"

Bobby's eyes were on the cake; he came back with difficulty.

"Well," he meditated, "I guess—would 'Home' be all right?"

"Home!" they all said, a little shakily, and drank to it.

Home! To the Thorpes, a little house on a shady street in America; to the Fräulein a thatched cottage in the mountains of Germany and an old mother; to Pepy, the room in a tenement where she went at night; to Ferdinand William Otto, a formal suite of apartments in the Palace, surrounded by pomp, ordered by rule and precedent, hardened by military discipline, and unsoftened by family love, save for the grim affection of the old King. Home!

After all, Pepy's plan went astray, for the Fräulein got the china baby, and Ferdinand William Otto the Lincoln penny.

"That," said Bobby's father, "is a Lincoln penny, young man. It bears the portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Have you ever heard of him?"

The Prince looked up. Did he not know the Gettysburg Address by heart?

"Yes, sir," he said. "The—my grandfather thinks that President Lincoln was a very great man."

"One of the world's greatest. I hardly thought, over here—" Mr. Thorpe paused and looked speculatively at the boy. "You'd better keep that penny where you won't lose it," he said soberly. "It doesn't hurt us to try to be good. If you're in trouble, think of the difficulties Abraham Lincoln surmounted. If you want to be great, think how great he was." He was a trifle ashamed of his own earnestness. "All that for a penny, young man!"

The festivities were taking a serious turn. There was a little packet at each plate, and now Bobby's mother reached over and opened hers.

"Oh!" she said, and exhibited a gaudy tissue-paper bonnet. Everybody had one. Mr. Thorpe's was a dunce's cap, and Fräulein's a giddy pierrette of black and white. Bobby had a military cap. With eager fingers Ferdinand William Otto opened his; he had never tasted this delicious paper-cap joy before.

It was a crown, a sturdy bit of gold paper, cut into points and set with red paste jewels—a gem of a crown. He was charmed. He put it on his head, with the unconsciousness of childhood, and posed delightedly.

The Fräulein looked at Prince Ferdinand William Otto, and slowly the color left her lean face. She stared. It was he, then, and none other. Stupid, not to have known at the beginning! He, the Crown Prince, here in the home of these barbarous Americans when, by every plan that had been made, he should now be in the hands of those who would dispose of him.

"I give you," said Mr. Thorpe, raising his glass toward his wife, "the giver of the feast. Boys, up with you!"

It was then that the Fräulein, making an excuse, slipped out of the room.

"Long Live the King!" will be concluded in the October number.

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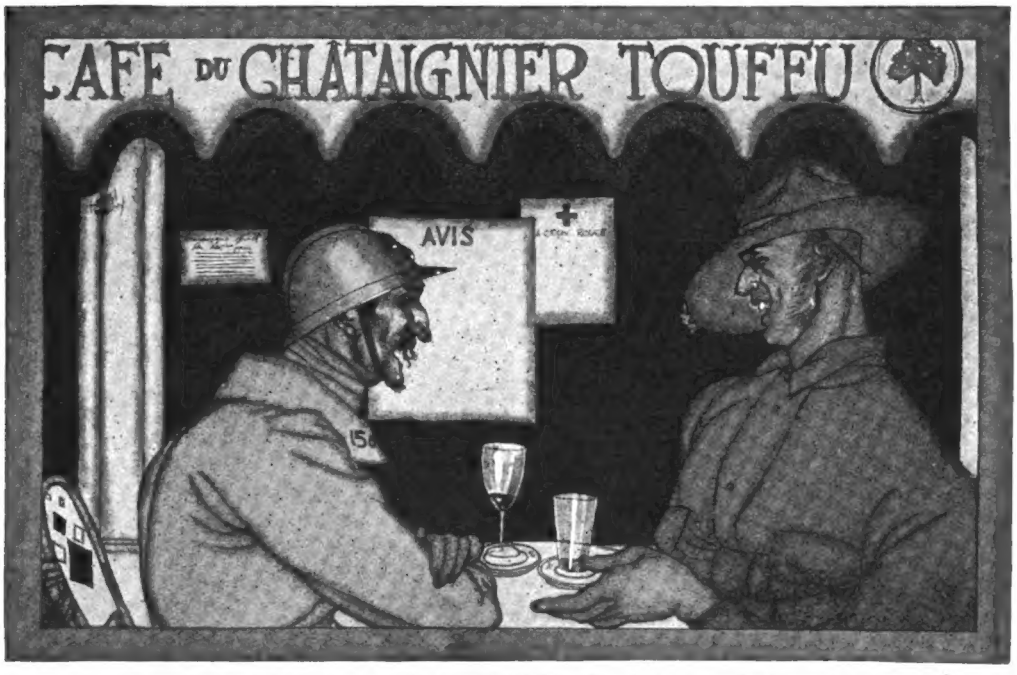
UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE



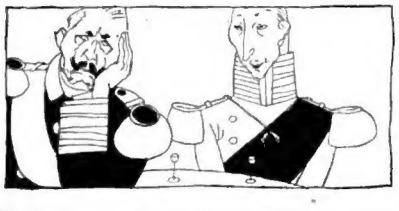
HEADING AND SKETCHES BY RALPH BARTON

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

SHE was pretty and he was handsome and they were very devoted to each other as they sat and held hands and watched the Reds play at the Cincinnati ball park.

"There's Hal Chase on first," observed the youth. "He's a bird. And there's Toney, the pitcher. He'll be our best man before long—"

The sweet young thing gasped. "We-ell, I guess he'll be all right—but, Arthur, this is so sudden!"



THE Kaiser and the Crown Prince were sipping a cordial.

"Father, who started the war?" quoth the Crown Prince, pulling on his cigaret.

"Why, we've proved it on England, France, and Belgium, to say nothing of Russia," sharply answered the Kaiser.

"Yes, I know," said the Prince, "but who was really responsible?"

"Well," his father answered, "if you must know it was like this. You remember when Roosevelt came back from Africa? I gave him a good time. I showed him all around and I took him out and together we reviewed the army. When we got back to the palace Teddy clapped me on the back and said: 'Bill, you can lick the world!'—and like a damned fool I believed him."

PRISON Reformer: We're inaugurating a circulating library for the use of the inmates. Is there any particular book you'd like to make use of?

Number 3,333: Sure. If I could only use it right, I'd like to have a railway guide.

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"NOW, boss, I's ready to go anywhere dey wants to send me," said a dusky citizen in a Southern city on Registration Day, after performing his patriotic duty. "Boss, jes' anywhere! But I ask jes' one thing and dat is don't put me in *NO* cavalry."

"Why do you draw the line on the cavalry?" asked the registrar.

"It's jes' like dis. When I's told to retreat, I don't want to be bothered with NO hoss."

A ROCK-RIBBED Republican precinct in the South is an oddity of which Texas lays claim to a few. One of these precincts is known as Mountain Springs, and in the national election its eleven votes go unanimously for the Republican presidential candidate. Mountain Springs can not boast of telephone or railway connections, but it has mail service once a week. It was nearly a week after the last national election day that the precinct chairman took the returns to the county seat.

"Who was elected?" asked the countryman of the first man he met.

"Wilson," was the reply.

"Wilson, hell!" he retorted. "Why, he didn't get a single vote at Mountain Springs. There must be something crooked about this thing."

NORA had been guilty of what was considered an indiscretion, so the mistress of the house had her on the carpet.

"If such a thing occurs again, Nora," said the lady, "I shall have to get another servant."

Whereupon Nora, with a grin, responded: "I wish you would, mum—there's easily enough work for two of us!"

IT WAS nearly noon when the irate traveling man found the night clerk of the little hotel in a North Carolina town.

"I told you to call me for the seven o'clock train. Now I have to lose twenty-four hours time. Why didn't you call me?"

"I couldn't very well," explained the clerk, cheerfully; "I just got up myself."

AN ITINERANT preacher of Alabama was plodding along on his way to the home of one of the brethren, when a young man driving a team of mules hitched to a wagon, overtook him and invited him to ride. Gladly accepting, he was soon seated by the youth's side.

It so chanced that they were in the middle of the forest in a wild, lonely spot, when the preacher, thinking the opportunity too good to be lost, turned to the young man and abruptly asked:

"Young man, are you prepared to die?"

The youth had been eying the preacher suspiciously for some time, and now gave a whoop that would have been creditable to a Comanche, sprang from the wagon and disappeared as fast as his legs could carry him.

A NEGRO was recently brought into a Virginia court on a charge of larceny. After hearing the evidence the judge pondered for a moment before passing sentence and said:

"Rastus, you are fined ten dollars."

Whereupon the negro replied: "Boss, dat's a small skimption. Ah got dat ten dollars right down in mah left-hand vest pocket."

"Well," continued the judge, "just dig down in your right-hand vest pocket and see if you can find thirty days."

A BURLY negro who registered in one of the fourth war precincts of Oklahoma City was anxious to escape military service. Some one had evidently told him of some of the things that would exempt him. The questions and answers on his card were as follows:

"How old are you?"
"Ah's most thutty-one."
"When were you born?"
"Ah don' 'zactly remember, boss."
"Are you a natural-born citizen?"
"Ah don' think so."
"Were you born in the United States?"
"No, sir. Ah was born in Texas."
"Have you any one dependent on you?"
"Yes, sir."
"Who are they?"
"Ah don' rightly know, sir. Ah's got lots of relations."

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